

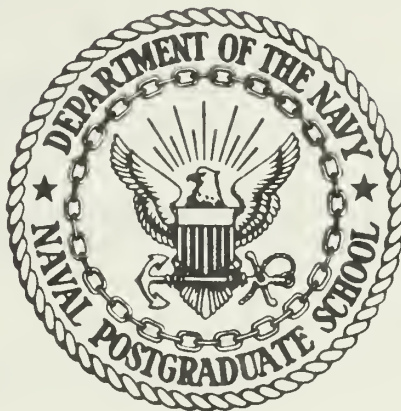
THE EUROCOMMUNIST CHALLENGE AND THE
EASTERN EUROPEAN AND SOVIET RESPONSE.

David Lee Helms

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Monterey, California



THESIS REPORT

THE EUROCOMMUNIST CHALLENGE

AND

THE EASTERN EUROPEAN AND SOVIET RESPONSE

by

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June 1977

Thesis Advisor:

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The Eurocommunist Challenge
and
The Eastern European and Soviet Response

by

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Captain, United States Air Force
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June 1977

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of Eurocommunism, especially as practiced by the Communist parties of Italy, France, and Spain, is a direct threat to Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe and a serious challenge to the power, prestige, and legitimacy of the CPSU itself. This research represents an analysis of the validity of the Eurocommunist shift away from Moscow's influence, the impact of the "Eurocommunist model" upon the ruling Communist parties, and the responses the West may expect from the Soviet bloc in the future. Using not only Western sources, but also the pronouncements of the Communist parties in the USSR, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, and others, this study reveals a wide variety of reaction from behind the "Iron Curtain." However, given the current political realities, the West may most likely expect the eventual expulsion of the Eurocommunist parties from the international Communist movement and a simultaneous Soviet-led repression of dissent and "revisionism" within its sphere of influence, perhaps rendering a fatal blow to East/West detente.

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I. INTRODUCTION

There have been only two European conferences of Communist parties. The first was held in Karlovy Vary, Czechoslovakia, in April 1967; the second was held in East Berlin in June 1976. By the time the Karlovy Vary conference convened, the unity of European communism was already fractured, owing to the ramifications of the Sino-Soviet conflict and the "revisionist" attitudes of several Communist parties in Western Europe. The conference itself was boycotted by the Albanian, Dutch, Icelandic, Norwegian, Yugoslav, and Romanian parties and the Swedish party chose to attend simply as observers. When the conference ended, however, all of those in attendance unanimously accepted a final document, largely drafted at the one preparatory meeting, which called for continued efforts to exploit detente and expressed the traditional unqualified acceptance of the CPSU as the unchallenged and unchallengable leader of the international Communist movement.

Nine years later in East Berlin, the second European conference of Communist parties was called to order. Originally suggested by the West German, Hungarian, and Bulgarian Communist parties in late 1973, the conference was made possible only after years of preparatory meetings. When the conference actually took place in June 1976,

twenty-nine East and West European Communist parties attended; only the isolationist Icelanders and the intransigent Albanians absented themselves. The conference lasted two days and the final document, which took over a year and a half to work out, was not even signed. Whatever had remained of the "monolithic unity" of international Communism was formally buried at the East Berlin Conference. "Proletarian internationalism" was not even mentioned in the final document nor was any special status accorded the CPSU or the USSR. Ritual references to Marxism-Leninism were deleted as was the traditional notion that Communism was the natural and only leader of all "progressive forces." The Berlin document stressed instead that each Communist party would adhere to the principles of equality and sovereign independence, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for the free choice of different roads in the struggle for social change and for socialism. Soviet prestige was badly damaged and the CPSU's leadership of the international Communist movement was not only challenged but was dismissed as an inoperative and obsolete concept.

It is highly unlikely that any world or pan-European conference of Communist parties will take place in the foreseeable future. In his assessment of the Berlin Conference, reported in l'Humanite on 2 July 1976, the French Communist Party leader, Georges Marchais, noted: "In our delegation's speech we submitted the idea that in the future

conferences like this will undoubtedly no longer meet the needs of the time." A similar statement by the Executive Committee of the British Communist Party, reported in Morning Star on 12 July 1976, commented: "Last month's conference in Berlin and the preparations for it, indicated that some methods utilized hitherto in the international Communist movement were no longer appropriate."

The political force which has received the greatest share of credit (or blame, depending upon one's ideological perspective) for these developments is something known as "Eurocommunism." Over the last several years, this term has come to mean many things to many people and as a political concept it has suffered from misuse, abuse, and misrepresentation. Given the impact and importance of the Eurocommunist phenomenon, it is imperative that this issue be brought into clearer focus. Only through an objective and accurate understanding of this concept and its impact upon the international scene can Western decision-makers design and implement rational, responsive, and realistic policies that serve their national interests and international responsibilities.

The "Eurocommunist" issue is large and complex. Given the constraints of time and space, this study addresses only the following three issues:

A. Who and what are the Eurocommunists and does their apparent political shift represent merely a tactical, short-term move or a more permanent, strategic doctrinal evolution?

B. What have been the demonstrable ramifications and impacts of the "Eurocommunists" upon the Communist party regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and how have these regimes chosen to respond to the Eurocommunist phenomenon?

C. Give the ever-widening distance between the "Eurocommunists" and the regimes in the East, what are the most likely responses or sets of responses that Western policy-makers can anticipate from the Soviet bloc nations in the future?

This research represents not only an attempt to integrate what has been written about Eurocommunism in Western journalistic and academic circles but also that which has found expression in the media, policy pronouncements, and political decisions within Eastern Europe and the USSR. The author is highly indebted to the staff at the Hoover Library at Stanford University and also to Dr. Jiri Valenta and Dr. David P. Burke, two outstanding scholars and professors at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. Without their invaluable and selfless assistance, this research effort would have been a virtually impossible task.

It is sincerely hoped that this study will stimulate further interest in this vital issue so that Western policy-makers will be able to base their decisions upon accurate, current, unbiased, comprehensive, and meaningful information.

II. EUROCOMMUNISM — WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Of the myriad of issues which have been piling up on the policy desks inside the walls of the Kremlin, Eurocommunism is certainly one of the most critical for the Soviet leadership. Other important problems requiring the constant attention of the Soviet elite certainly exist, but few are as potentially destabilizing or explosive as the phenomenon of Eurocommunism. For example, Sino-Soviet relations have not improved, as had been hoped, since the death of Mao. But Sino-Soviet relations have seldom been good and the Chinese threat to Soviet power is currently minimal. The USSR is also faced with corruption, inefficiency, and waste in her social and economic systems, but such problems have beset the Soviet state since its founding in 1917, and the Soviet leadership has grown accustomed to dealing with them, although they are most reluctant to admit this fact in public fora. SALT negotiations and the ramifications of detente continue to absorb the attention of the Soviet elite, but these issues, too, have been around for years and will continue to be areas of vital concern for as long as the USSR and the USA face each other as superpower adversaries on the international scene. Even the much-publicized problem of internal dissent within the USSR is merely a reoccurring problem that threat, intimidation, expulsion, and incarceration have largely managed to control. Eurocommunism,

however, is a relatively new political force and a potentially damaging challenge to the Soviet leadership and the CPSU. It is also apparent, judging from the range of the reactions that have come from the Kremlin within recent months, that the Soviet leadership is not only concerned about Eurocommunism, but has also been unwilling or unable to develop a clear and consistent policy with which to deal effectively with this new political phenomenon.

What is this thing called "Eurocommunism" that is causing such a sensation in the journalistic, academic, and governmental circles of the world? What is meant by the term and to whom does it , or should it, apply? The word itself implies that one should look to Europe for the answers to these and other related questions, yet much contemporary literature on the subject suggests that to limit one's attention to simply the European continent is to miss a great deal of what the term embraces in its entirety. The point is merely this; to date, no one has been able to crystallize a definition of Eurocommunism that both defines the word in specific, meaningful terms and that also satisfies the journalistic, academic and political whims of those who wish to write and speak about it. Because of this worldwide semantic failure, the term "Eurocommunism" has come to mean many different things to many different people; it has been abused, misused, misinterpreted, and unfortunately, almost destroyed as a viable political concept. Before one

can begin to assess the "Eurocommunist" impact upon such things as Western democracy, NATO, Eastern Europe, or the Soviet leadership of an international Communist movement, one must know what "Eurocommunism" is, and what it is not! To do this, to retrieve "Eurocommunism" from the never-never land of nebulous concepts to which it has been gradually, yet effectively, condemned, it is imperative that one turn one's attention to the area of and actors in that part of the world which spawned the original concept -- the land mass of Western Europe and the Communist parties that are to be found there.

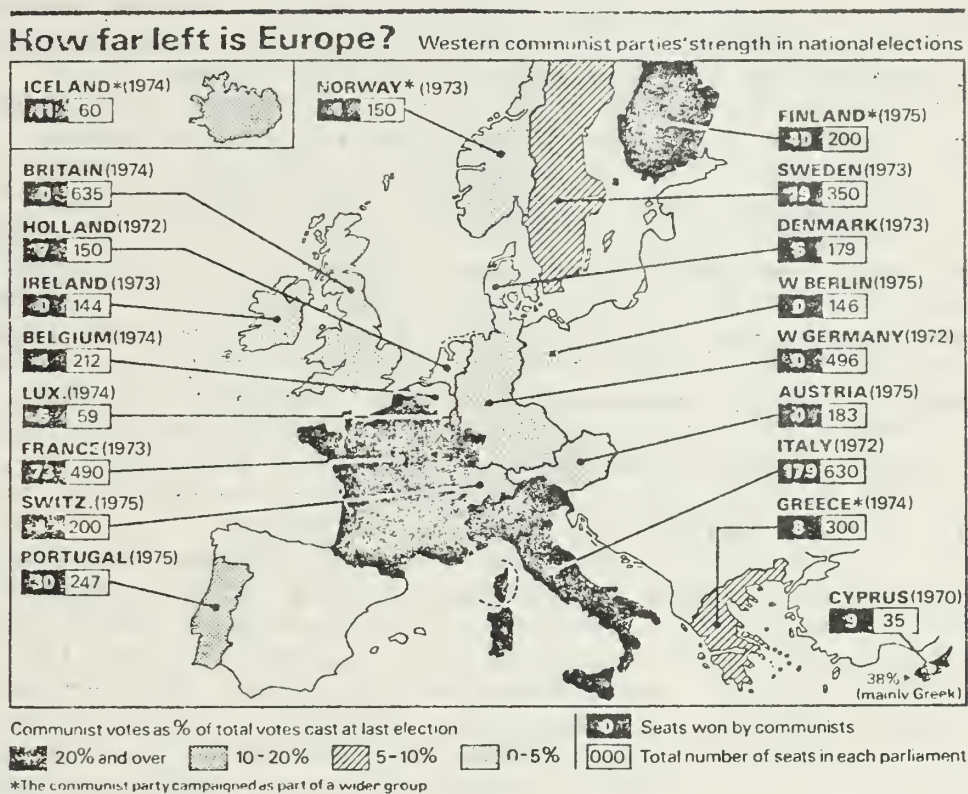
It should come as a surprise to no one that there are active Communist parties in every Western European nation. All of these parties have been operating in their respective nations since the early 1930's and, since the Spanish government lifted the 38-year-old ban on the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) on 10 April 1977, all of these parties are legal. The following chart, assembled from data presented in Staar's 1976 Yearbook on International Communist Affairs should give the reader a general idea of the relative size, strength, and electoral impact of each of these Communist parties.¹

¹Richard Staar, 1976 Yearbook on International Communist Affairs (Hoover Institute: Stanford, 1976), pp. xxvi-xxvii.

COUNTRY	PARTY MEMBERSHIP (Size/Percent of Population)			PERCENT OF VOTE (Percent/Year)		
AUSTRIA	25,000	-	.3%	1.2%	-	1975
BELGIUM	10,000	-	.1%	3.2%	-	1974
DENMARK	8,000	-	.15%	4.2%	-	1975
FINLAND	48,000	-	1.0%	19.0%	-	.975
FRANCE	500,000	-	.9%	21.0%	-	1973
GREAT BRITAIN	29,000	-	.5%	0.5%	-	1974
GREECE	27,500	-	.2%	3.6%	-	1974
ICELAND	2,500	-	1.0%	18.0%	-	1974
IRELAND	300	-	.08%	0.0%	-	1973
LUXEMBOURG	500	-	.1%	10.4%	-	1974
NETHERLANDS	10,000	-	.07%	4.5%	-	1972
NORWAY	2,500	-	.06%	1.0%	-	1973
PORTUGAL	50,000	-	.6%	12.0%	-	1975
SWEDEN	17,000	-	.2%	5.3%	-	1973
SWITZERLAND	6,000	-	.01%	2.5%	-	1975
WEST BERLIN	8,000	-	.3%	1.9%	-	1975
WEST GERMANY	40,000	-	.06%	0.3%	-	1972
ITALY	1,700,000	-	3.0%	27.0%	-	1972
SPAIN ²	100,000	-	.3%	-----		

²This figure represents estimated membership only, based upon data presented in a report in Christian Science Monitor, 11 April 1977, p. 26.

The graphic below, published in early 1976 in The Economist, also illustrates the relative electoral positions of the various Western European Communist parties and, in addition, provides an indication of how many parliamentary seats are currently held by these Communist parties.³



Several interesting points can be made through an analysis of these data. First, although the majority of these parties have grown somewhat since 1975, it is apparent that these Communist parties carry an electoral clout far in excess of their respective membership figures. Throughout Western

³ The Economist, 3 January 1976, pp. 32-33.

Europe in recent elections, the $2\frac{1}{2}$ million communist party members have managed to attract over 25 million votes, a 10 to 1 ratio. Additionally, it is fascinating to discover that the current world-wide debate concerning Western European communism has been generated by the activities of a political force representing only 0.7% of the entire Western European population in membership and only around 7% of the entire Western European electorate in popular votes. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, over 92% of the communist party members in Western Europe are to be found in only three countries: Italy - 68%, France - 20%, and Spain - 4%. Communist party membership in the remainder of the Western European countries totals less than 800,000 - a mere 0.1% of this particular population group.

Much political power is currently held by the Italian (PCI) and French (PCF) Communist parties and, since its recent legalization, many observers predict a strong electoral showing by the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) as well. The PCI is considered to be only a matter of years away from assuming a parliamentary majority on the national level and the PCF, in concert with the French Socialists, appears to be headed for a parliamentary majority in the national elections of 1978.

Assuming the "Euro" in Eurocommunism is not a misnomer, an assumption this author would hold to be valid, what set of political principles or ideological concepts does this term denote? Indeed, does "Eurocommunism" exist as an

independent political movement and, if so, how should it be defined?

Many experts, especially in the Western nations, claim Eurocommunism to be a new ideology and a new political movement of world-wide relevance and impact; as a new communism which maintains some of its original aims while accepting the basic tents of pluralistic democracy and the parliamentary system as essential in strategic and not just in tactical terms.⁴ Other observers hold Eurocommunism to be simply a term for describing some of the policies put forward, on some occasions, by some communist parties in Western Europe, Japan, and other areas of the world.⁵ Still others would assert that Eurocommunism is but a political charade that speaks of democracy and pluralism only in the future tense, insofar as it concerns a hypothetical advance to power on the part of its proponents. Behind this liberal mask, the old undemocratic, unwaveringly pro-Soviet face still remains.⁶

East of the "Iron Curtain" Eurocommunism has been assessed and defined in a totally different manner. First

⁴Arrigo Levi, "Eurocommunism: A Foot in the Door or a Seat at the Table," Saturday Review (11 December 1976), p. 15.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Michael Leeden, "Eurocommunism Exposed," The New Republic (26 March 1977), p. 14.

Secretary Todor Zhivkov of the Bulgarian Communist Party has called Eurocommunism simply a "new kind of anti-communism"⁷ and the Bulgarian party organ, Rabotnichesko delo, has demanded that Eurocommunism be "unmasked as anti-Marxist" since its purpose is to "deny real socialism in the USSR."⁸ The Hungarian press has portrayed Eurocommunism as "a product of bourgeois propaganda which is no socialist alternative" and as such is simply "fiction."⁹ Finally, in December 1976, Vadim Zagladin, a prominent Soviet Central Committee member, described Eurocommunism as a term "invented by the Americans, particularly Zbigniew Brezezinski," and stated that it was aimed at "breaking the unitary front of the international communist movement with an anti-Soviet aim."¹⁰

Within the Eurocommunist movement itself there are varying definitions of the term. For example, Jean Kanapa of the PCF's Politburo considers the term imprecise and at times too suggestive. Yet, Kanapa uses the term because it

⁷Belgrade NIN, No. 1355, 26 December 1976, as reported by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Daily Report, Eastern Europe (12 January 1977), p. I-12.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Tarsadalmi Szemle, February 1977, as reported by FBIS, Daily Report, Eastern Europe (25 February 1977), p. F-4.
NOTE: Due to time constraints, and in the interests of brevity and clarity, subsequent footnotes citing the daily reports of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service will contain simply the following annotation - (FBIS). This should allow the reader to discern that a FBIS translation was used and not the original document or publication.

¹⁰L'Espresso, 26 December 1976, (FBIS).

is a convenient shorthand for "several communist parties in industrialized nations which, though in different situations, have had the feeling of being confronted with fundamentally common problems, so that they have come up with similar answers, thereby outlining a socialist perspective which is strongly marked by a common concern for democracy."¹¹

As should be obvious from the foregoing, there is little consensus regarding the meaning of this term. While many of the above definitions, and others, could probably be supported adequately by data, the truth lies somewhere in-between. A thorough examination of the available evidence has led this author to believe that the following definition of Eurocommunism is a fair, accurate, and objective one that could be readily accepted by virtually all seriously interested students of the Eurocommunist phenomenon.

First, the term "Eurocommunism" itself was coined, not by any particular communist party, but rather by the Western media in an attempt to conceptualize the emergence of a more moderate, democratic, and less revolutionary tendency in world communism. Specifically, the term refers to the outlook of the Italian Communist Party as it developed under the tutelage of its leaders, Gramsci, Togliatti, and Berlinguer; but it also encompasses the outlook of other Western European

¹¹Jan F. Triska, "Diversity in Unity: Eurocommunism and the Soviet Union," Paper presented at the Conference on Soviet-American Relations in the 1970's at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Washington, D.C. (23-25 February 1977), p. 6n.

parties — primarily those of France and Spain — which have recently adopted several features of the PCI's ideological and political approach.¹² The PCI is, without a doubt, the consensus leader of this "movement," and the PCE is certainly the most anti-Soviet of the three. Other communist parties have, at various times and on particular issues, made significant contributions to the "spirit" of Eurocommunism yet the main thrust of this new political approach remains clearly in the hands of the PCI, PCF, and the PCE. Some of the other contributors have been the communist parties of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Great Britain, Iceland, Holland, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and even Japan and Australia; a situation which might suggest that Eurocommunism is actually a worldwide trend in the international communist movement which finds its greatest expression in the developed non-communist nations. As will be covered in more detail later, there is also evidence to suggest that the communist parties of Romania, and Yugoslavia, plus certain segments of the ruling elites in other Eastern European countries, also are sympathetic to and at times supportive of the Eurocommunist's political initiatives. Despite its growing international significance and global appeal — factors which have blurred the term's definition — Eurocommunism remains primarily a

¹²Charles Gati, "The Europeanization of Communism," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 55, No. 3 (April 1977), p. 541.

Western European phenomenon focusing specifically upon the party platforms and political activities of the communist parties of Italy, France, and Spain, although not applicable to the still pro-Soviet parties such as the Portuguese and Luxembourg CP's. These three parties are the largest, the most vocal, and the most politically successful communist parties on the Western European land mass and it is in this area where the first dramatic impacts of Eurocommunism will be felt.

There appear to be at least three basic, interrelated propositions which underpin the Eurocommunist ideological platform and which set Eurocommunism apart as an independent, viable, and unique political concept. Charles Gati's discussion of these ideological positions is probably the best to date. First, the Eurocommunists persistently demand that each party be free to apply the teachings of Marxism-Leninism according to national needs and circumstances. This, of course, is tantamount to rejecting the universal validity of the Soviet "model" and experience and to denying any leading role of the CPSU in the international communist movement. Second, the Eurocommunists disavow any desire to obtain a monopoly of power, thus rejecting the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." They claim, instead, their commitment to Western democratic and parliamentary traditions, pluralism, human and civil rights, and the various "freedoms" currently enjoyed within the Western political systems. Third, the Eurocommunists maintain an

interest in and an insistence upon the creation of a broadly based coalition of political forces to seek the resolution of pressing economic and social problems, proposing the cooperation of diverse political elements all sharing a common program aimed at the reduction and eventual elimination of the power of monopoly capital.¹³

Although there is much evidence to suggest that Eurocommunism is much more than a momentary aberration in the communist drive for world domination, the jury is still out on the notion that these communist parties have permanently and irrevocably internalized the values and rules of the Western democracies. Certainties in human events are scarce, but the continued evolution and development of Eurocommunism may well result in the creation of a new, independent, and eclectic communist movement that could be integrated, as an equal and responsible member, into the democratic political systems of the West without undo fear or suspicion. Should this development occur, then misgivings and apprehensions in the West will surely dissipate and those in the East, especially in Moscow, will only grow more severe. A thoughtful and analytical assessment of the recent past regarding the growth of the Eurocommunist phenomenon will serve to highlight the direction in which the current trend is going.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 541-542.

III. EUROCOMMUNIST DEVELOPMENT — SCHISM OR CHARADE?

A. THE BEGINNINGS

By 1914 socialism was a strong force in the political life of Europe. There was, however, no unified socialist movement, despite the existence of a Second Socialist International since 1889. The socialist stream was made up of several major and minor currents: Marxism, appealing to middle-class intellectuals and self-educated workers; Syndicalism and Anarchosyndicalism based upon the doctrines of Proudhon, Bakunin, and later of Sorel; agrarian socialism; German economic socialism; Christian socialism; labor-oriented socialism; and the British Fabians (a highly respected although relatively small group), along with some continental revisionists, who were convinced of the superiority of democracy over other political systems.¹⁴

This far from homogeneous bloc was concerned with at least three major practical problems: structure of the socialist organizations (and therefore of the future socialist societies); methods to be used for the conquest of power; and relations with non-socialists, particularly with the progressive liberals. On the first issue, there was conflict between the advocates of a democratic structure and

¹⁴Massimo Salvadori, The Rise of Modern Communism (Dryden Press: Hinsdale, 1975), pp. 9-10.

advocates of a disciplined, authoritarian structure. On the second issue there was bitter debate between the proponents of revolution and those willing to use the means available within liberal democratic regimes (parliamentarianism, freedom of the press, and freedom of association). On the third issue there was conflict between the advocates and opponents of collaboration. The socialist right wing "urged collaboration with the other parties of the left" and insisted that "the workers could improve their lot within the framework of the existing societies."¹⁵ In the extreme left wing, leaders such as Rosa Luxemburg and V. Lenin opposed collaboration in any form and were convinced that "the upheaval of the proletariat ... would organize a collectivist society instead of the existing individualistic one."¹⁶ Where democracy was concerned, the right wing was as democratic as nonsocialist democrats and the left wing rejected it completely, even if limited to socialists only.¹⁷

World War I dramatically deepened the cleavages in the socialist movement and, in fact, split it into three separate factions: the social patriots, the pacifists, and the revolutionaries. The latter faction was the smallest and its most prominent spokesmen were Lenin and his Bolsheviks.

¹⁵F. Borkenau, World Communism (New York: Norton, 1939), p. 19.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷Salvadori, Rise, p. 11.

They broke from the rest of the socialist movement not simply because of a conflict in program, but more accurately because of a conflict in temperament: the humane tolerance of the social patriots and pacifists versus the violent intolerance of the leftist revolutionaries. World War I helped to crystallize the difference between democratic socialism acting within the European liberal tradition and authoritarian socialism, later communism, rejecting the ideas, spirit, and institutions of democracy.¹⁸

There is some evidence to suggest that the "taproot" of the current Eurocommunist phenomenon may be found lodged somewhere within the Second Socialist International, especially within its right and central wings. Even if this assertion is valid, the fact remains that all the communist parties formed after the successful Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 lined up willingly and quickly behind the CPSU and actively sought and readily accepted the leadership of Lenin, and later Stalin. By 1924 every communist party supported Stalin's assertion that communism's main enemy now was "the parties of the Second International ... The mortal sin of the Second International was that it overestimated the importance of the parliamentary forms of struggle, that it considered them virtually the only form."¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁹ Josef Stalin, Foundations of Leninism (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 89.

With the triumph of the Stalinist faction in the late 1920's, international communism in reality became the projection of Soviet communism. All communist parties took orders from Moscow and those that defied Moscow's orders risked being disbanded, as the Polish communist party was in 1938.²⁰ Soviet leadership of the communist movement was unquestioned and through such organizations as the Comintern, and later the Cominform, the CPSU was largely successful in controlling and directing the activities of virtually every communist party.

In the West, liberals and conservatives alike expressed their abhorrence of the direction the communist movement had taken after the Revolution of 1917. Communist advocacy of violence, terror and armed revolution created a deep-seated fear of communism in the West and, although numerous communist parties were established in the Western nations, their influence was minimal and their programs and methods were strongly and continually opposed. Undaunted, however, these parties consistently espoused the beliefs of Lenin and Stalin and also looked to the Soviet Union for guidance, direction, training, and financial and political support. By the late 1930's, the Western nations had come to so fear the Soviet-inspired communist ideology that several of the

²⁰The Economist (3 January 1976), p. 32.

soon-to-be Allies seriously considered joining forces with Nazi Germany in order to crush, for all time, the communist threat to Western democracy.²¹ But the Russo-German non-aggression pact of 1939 and Hitler's subsequent invasion of Poland launched Europe into a massive war which, two years later, found the liberal Western democracies fighting hand-in-hand with their communist allies in order to thwart the designs of Germany's Thousand Year Reich. In 1943, Stalin dissolved the Comintern and at the same time, European communists began to win a new respectability because of their work in the struggle against the Facist enemy.

B. THE POST-WAR METAMORPHOSIS

Immediately after the war, the communists joined several Western European governments, enjoying their greatest successes in Italy and France. In the first post-war French elections, the PCF obtained the support of more than one-fourth of the voters and participated actively in coalition governments for nearly three years after the liberation of the country. In Italy communist ministers sat in coalition governments from April 1944 to May 1947. Receiving one-fifth of the total vote in the general elections of 1946, the PCI and her fellow-travelers grew rapidly into the second-largest

²¹Juergen Bruhn, The German Resistance to Hitler and the Anglo-American Response (University of Hamburg: Germany, 1974), p. 106.

group in the Italian parliament by 1948. Similar, although smaller communist party gains were to be seen in Scandanavia, Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg.²²

These early successes, however, were to be short-lived. In 1947, Stalin set up the Cominform as a successor to the Comintern in hopes of stepping up the communist struggle against America and its allies in Europe. Moscow ordered the Western communist parties into the streets to strike and demonstrate, but when their efforts failed to stop the consolidation of capitalist Europe, the communist parties found themselves out in the cold. Their credibility was further shaken by economic failures in Eastern Europe just when Western capitalism, newly revitalized, was scoring its most notable successes. An even more crippling blow was dealt to the Western communist parties by the rapid and complete establishment of Soviet hegemony over and the formation of communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe. As the Cold War gained momentum, communist influence in the West declined rapidly and several communist parties were actually declared illegal and forced to operate underground or in exile. With so many millstones around their necks, Western European communists appeared condemned to remain out of power forever.

²²Salvadori, Rise, pp. 86-88.

But as Cold War developed into "peaceful coexistence," the Western attitudes toward communism began to change, as did many of the Western communist parties themselves. Although still ardently opposed to communist ideology and dogma, the West now felt constrained to accept their native communist parties in the belief that they posed no real threat to their respective nations or systems of government and, due to the strength of the Western political and economic systems, the communist parties would simply remain an inconvenience on the left fringe of Western political life. Events, however, were to take another course.

Being accepted as part and parcel of the various national political scenes, numerous communist parties in the West began to slowly re-organize, adapt their methods to the prevalent pluralistic and democratic system, take part in local and national elections and to grow. This growth was especially evident during the late 1960's and early 1970's, when parts of Western Europe began to be shaken by severe economic difficulties and political instability. The success of their efforts to date is seen most clearly in France and Italy. The Italian Communist Party wields enormous political power and may only be a matter of years away from assuming a parliamentary majority on the national level. In France, likewise, there exists an excellent possibility that the French Communist Party, in concert with the French Socialists, may indeed gain a parliamentary majority in 1978; an event made all the more likely by the March 1977 victory of the

Socialist-Communist "Union of the Left" in the nation-wide municipal elections in which this coalition received the support of over 52% of the French electorate.²³ In Spain, too, communist efforts have met with success. On 10 April 1977, the Spanish government legalized the Spanish Communist Party for the first time since the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939.

In the cases of Italy and France, the West may be faced soon with the heretofore impossible reality that two of Europe's largest and most industrialized nations will be governed by communist regimes voted into positions of power through electoral processes. The electoral gains of the communist parties in Western Europe have truly shaken the old order. What was earlier regarded as an inconceivable event is now seen as a highly likely possibility and was, at first, met with both overt and covert admonitions and threats, especially toward the Italians. The long-standing Western distrust of communism, combined with the ramification of the events of 1974-75 in Portugal, caused distinct rumblings of economic, political, and military sanctions in some of the major capitals of the Western world.

There is, however, a distinct dilemma facing these shocked Western governments. Not only are these communist

²³Christian Science Monitor (22 March 1977), p. 5.

parties achieving remarkable electoral successes, but they are also espousing, and have been for several years, a political program vastly different from what had become, in the West, the accepted Communist Party line. These Eurocommunists, a name created by the Western media in an attempt to conceptualize the new political thrusts of the Western European communist parties, particularly the PCI, PCE, and the PCF, proclaim themselves to be truly democratic. According to their parties' spokesmen, Eurocommunism stands for freedom of choice; pluralism, human and civil rights; liberty, religious freedom, peaceful change; the non-ideological nature of the state; secret, direct, and proportional ballots; independent trade unions; freedom for scientific research and cultural and artistic endeavors; and open dialogue and cooperation with others, even those of a different political and/or ideological persuasion.²⁴ Supporting continued cooperation with the United States, the Common Market, and even NATO, these parties also challenge Soviet authority and control, proletarian internationalism, the Soviet socialist model, any form of dictatorship including the dictatorship of the proletariat, international coercion, ideological orthodoxy and dogma, and the status quo. Instead, they argue for equality, independence, sovereignty, non-intervention,

²⁴Triska, "Diversity," p. 1.

national identity, peaceful change, and free consensus of and for all communist parties.²⁵

Although the temptation is great, one should not regard the Eurocommunists as a bloc. As one could easily demonstrate, there can and does exist within the framework of Eurocommunism significant differences of emphasis and apparent commitment to the above beliefs. The point is, however, that these Eurocommunist parties represent themselves not only as unlike their Eastern European and Soviet counterparts, but also, on many occasions, as diametrically opposed to them. Whether this is a strategic shift or a tactical charade is still an issue under heavy debate within governmental, journalistic, and academic circles. But it is this author's contention, supported by the research of Jan Triska, Neil McInnes, Kevin Devlin and other scholars, that these Eurocommunist parties have indeed changed and, as such, represent yet a third major schism in the communist movement.

If the Western governments face a dilemma over the Eurocommunists (which indeed they do), it is of trifling import when compared to the dilemma the Eurocommunists present to the Soviet Union, the CPSU, and the entrenched leadership in Eastern Europe. In the West there is certainly concern, but in the East one cannot help but sense a feeling of

²⁵Ibid.

confusion, apprehension, frustration, and at times near-panic. It is as if the rise of Eurocommunism in Western Europe has raised the specter of doom within the Soviet orbit and that a "life or death" struggle has already begun in which the Kremlin can only foresee eventual defeat unless the Soviet Union is able to respond quickly and effectively to this new and ominous challenge.

In order to understand and appreciate the profound changes that have occurred within the communist movement during the past quarter-century, and thus the basis for the growing Soviet concern, it is necessary to critically examine the evolutionary, political developments which created the Eurocommunist phenomenon of the present day.

IV. THE LOOSENING OF THE BONDS

During the almost sixty years that have passed since the Revolution of 1917, two distinct qualities have characterized the international communist movement. The first has been the continual Soviet effort to subordinate the interests of the foreign communist parties to those of the CPSU; the second has been the equally strong desire of many of these foreign parties to resist such CPSU pressure and to set out upon their own independent "paths" to socialism.²⁶ For the first thirty years of the movement, however, the CPSU had little difficulty in maintaining control of these "rebellious" foreign communist parties.

Also during the first three decades of the communist movement, one witnessed numerous protestations of independence from Moscow and declarations of support for democratic principles by many foreign communist parties that were purely tactical moves designed to screen off the actual extent of CPSU control and the actual goals and programs of these parties. Thorez was boasting in 1936 that French communist policy was set in Paris, not in Moscow, at a time when his speeches were being written by a Comintern emissary — who

²⁶Gati, "Europeanization," p. 539.

also had taken Thorez's wife as his mistress.²⁷ In 1944, Jozsef Revai of the Hungarian Communist Party commented, "I declare that we do not regard the national collaboration of the several parties as a passing, political coalition, as a tactical chess move, but rather as a long-lasting alliance. We will stand by our given word."²⁸ As World War II came to an end, the German communists arrived back from twelve years of exile in Moscow with pamphlets lauding "national" communism, which had been printed by the CPSU. At the same time, the PCF was publicizing its differences with the Soviet Union over the future of the German Ruhr – again asserting its independence of Moscow while it was toeing the Soviet line.²⁹ Later in 1945, Georgi Dimitrov, the Bulgarian leader, proudly proclaimed to the world that "the assertion that the communists allegedly want to seize full power ... is a malicious legend and slander. It is not true that the communists want to have a single party government."³⁰ Finally, in 1946, Poland's Wladyslaw Gomulka stated that the

²⁷P. Robrieux, Maurice Thorez: Vie Secrete et Vie Publique, (Paris: Fayard Press, 1975), 210, as quoted by Neil McInnes in Eurocommunism, Washington Paper No. 37, CSIS (Washington, D.C.: Sage Publications, 1976), p. 52.

²⁸Delmagyarország (Szeged), 5 December 1944, cited in Gati, "Europeanization," p. 543.

²⁹D. Desanti, Les Staliniens: Une Experience Politique 1944-1956 (Paris: Fayard Press, 1975), 37, as quoted in McInnes, Eurocommunism, p. 52.

³⁰Izvestia, 13 November 1945, cited in Gati, "Europeanization," p. 543.

Polish road to socialism was "significant because it does not include the necessity of a violent, revolutionary, political upheaval ... [it has] eliminated the necessity of a dictatorship of the proletariat."³¹

As Fred W. Neal correctly points out, the term "Euro-communism," as far as it signifies independence from the Soviet Union and a different socialist system, was more or less invented by the Yugoslavs.³² In 1948 Yugoslavia became the first true dissenter from the international strategy of the CPSU when Stalin publicly expelled that country from the communist movement. For a long time, Yugoslavia was alone; not one communist party came to its defense, nor was there any criticism of or protest against Stalin's treatment of this small Balkan state. In fact, many communist parties denounced the "heresy" of Tito's regime well into the 1950's.³³

Meanwhile, the Spanish Communist Party leader, Santiago Carrillo, moved to give the PCE an image independent of and even antithetical to the USSR. During the early 1950's

³¹Wladyslaw Gomulka, "People's Democracy: The Way to the Peaceful Development of Poland, Political Affairs (April 1947), p. 328.

³²Fred W. Neal, "Yugo-Communism," Paper presented to the California Conference on Eurocommunism and United States Foreign Policy (16 April 1977), p. 1.

³³Triska, "Diversity," p. 9.

Carrillo staked out a forward position in opposition to Moscow's hegemonic ambitions within the communist movement and plunged into bitter debates with the CPSU over such issues as China, democracy, and the sovereignty of each national party.³⁴

Nikita Khrushchev's speech at the 20th Soviet Party Congress in 1956 confused and irritated many of the Western European communist parties, but more importantly, gave to these parties a license they had previously not possessed. After this speech, the Italian Communist Party began to press its separate development in conditions of now-approved "peaceful coexistence" and became the first communist party to take a pro-Yugoslav stand.³⁵ Additionally, the PCI, under Togliatti's leadership, began to openly propose a peaceful Italian road to socialism within the context of a "polycentric" communist movement, with no one party dominating it. These independent initiatives were strongly criticized in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe and Khrushchev continued to urge the Western European communist parties to imitate the Czech communists who had seized power in a coup in February, 1948.³⁶ Another unexpected outcome of Khrushchev's

³⁴Warren Zimmerman, "Western European Communists and the Soviet Union," Paper presented at CSIS Seminar, Washington, D.C. (2 May 1976), p. 8.

³⁵Ibid., p. 5.

³⁶The Economist (3 January 1976), p. 32.

1956 speech was the gradual emergence of PCE, PCI and later, PCF criticism of the illiberal features of the Soviet society, beginning with the condemnation of the trial of Siniavsky and Daniel and the publication of anti-Semitic literature in the Ukraine.³⁷

Until 1956-1957, except in Yugoslavia the communist leadership of European and minor Asian states controlled by communists and China was subordinate to that of the Soviet Union. Since 1943 world communism had been directed by the Presidium of the CPSU with the collaboration of a few prominent communists from other countries. But during 1956-1957 the power-struggle factionalism led first to a series of disturbances and then to a weakening in the cohesion of the communist bloc.

The communist regimes in Poland and Hungary lacked a strong mass following and were faced with numerous dissident groups which provided a foundation for factionalism. The weakening of Soviet control, the result of inter-party strife in Moscow, facilitated its increase which resulted in semiparalysis in the communist parties of these two countries in 1956. There were strikes in Poland in June and open revolt in Hungary in October.

In Poland, however, the timely death of Bierut allowed the Polish communist leadership to rally around Gomulka,

³⁷McInnes, Eurocommunism, p. 14.

whose concessions to the peasants, the Catholic Church, and the intellectuals enabled Poland to escape a revolution.³⁸ In Hungary, however, the rift between opposing factions was more severe and after months of unrest a revolution broke out in October. For about ten days the Hungarians were free, but in November, Soviet troops intervened and reestablished communist control. This Soviet intervention caused a minor crisis among communists in democratic countries and a major one among fellow-travelers.³⁹

In Peking, the factional quarrels among Soviet leaders were looked upon with serious misgivings but there was hope that unity would soon be reestablished in Moscow. After trying for nearly a year to maintain a deferential attitude toward the Soviet Union, the Chinese leadership finally sided with the Stalinist faction. Malenkov's and Khrushchev's policy of pseudocoexistence with "capitalism" had no supporters in Peking and the more Khrushchev's faction strengthened its hold in the USSR, the more independent the PRC became. At the western end of the communist world, a process similar to that in China developed in small and isolated Albania. By the end of 1957, there were actually three separate and

³⁸Salvadori, Rise, pp. 110-111.

³⁹Ibid.

independent centers of communist power: Moscow, Peking, and Belgrade.⁴⁰

These developments had a dramatic impact on the communist parties of the West. By 1962, there were about 2.5 million party members in twenty-six Western democracies. Of that total, more than two million were in Italy and France — a considerable decline from the more than three million of the immediate post-war period. In the European democracies, the number of votes received by communists in general elections held immediately after the war had reached over sixteen million. Over a decade and a half later, in considerably larger electorates, the vote was down to thirteen million.⁴¹

Although the decline in communist dynamism in Western Europe was in no small measure the result of the post-Stalin factional struggle within the CPSU, more important was the Wirtschaftswunder of continental Europe and the realization that through welfare measures and the introduction of so-called stabilizers, economic security and stability could be achieved within the framework of democratic, pluralistic institutions, and that it was possible to keep the major advantages of the free enterprise system while eliminating many of the major disadvantages. Also of great import was the fact that

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 112.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 119.

many Western Europeans, especially within the intelligentsia, had embraced communism during the 1930's and 1940's in the strong and sincere conviction that it was the road to the ultimate fulfillment of democratic aspirations and goals: belatedly, they came to realize that, Stalinist or Khrushchevite, communism was the negation of such goals and aspirations.⁴² Even within the Western European communist parties there was dissatisfaction with the direction the CPSU had taken and a growing realization that continued blind obedience to Soviet directives was counter-productive and not in the interests of these parties' political growth and electoral success.

The dismissal of Nikita Khrushchev in 1964 brought severe criticism from the Spanish communists and in the same year, the Dutch Communist Party made a dramatic break with the CPSU, proclaiming its autonomous, independent line, its primary concern with national electoral politics as opposed to "requirements" of the international movement, and its wish for collaboration with socialists, for pluralism, and for the electoral road to political power.⁴³ Simultaneously, the Romanian leader Gheorghiu-Dej began to criticize the concept of "proletarian internationalism" and indicated publicly that Romania should follow its own road to socialism.

⁴²Ibid., p. 120.

⁴³Triska, "Diversity," p. 8.

Beginning in 1965, his successor, Ceausescu, actually did begin to take a "Romanian road."⁴⁴

The year 1965 also witnessed the startling declaration by the Swedish Communist Party (SKP) that it accepted the principle of "democratic alternation of political parties;" that it could be voted out of power just like any other party.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, directly across the Gulf of Bothnia, the moderate wing of the Finnish Communist Party began to speak openly of their peaceful way to power, civil liberties, and adherence to party plurality.⁴⁶

Throughout 1966, the new regime in Moscow was obliged to cope with numerous threats to its leadership and control. Although there were strong signs of declining Soviet influence within the Western communist parties, it was the threats to Soviet control in Eastern Europe that caught and held the primary attention of the CPSU. Romania's efforts to water-down the Warsaw Pact were met by a conference of Warsaw Pact nations in Bucharest in July 1966. The net effect of this Soviet-inspired conference was failure to tie the hands of Romania or any other Pact member who might wish to follow Romania's example in pursuing independent policies.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Salvadori, Rise, p. 134.

⁴⁵Neil McInnes, The Communist Parties of Western Europe, (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 178.

⁴⁶Triska, "Diversity," p. 8.

⁴⁷Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Power and Europe 1945-1970, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 309.

The most notable sign that the Bucharest conference had not produced a workable formula for a united policy front came on January 31, 1967, when Romania took the independent step of establishing diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany, thus openly breaking the common line on West Germany. The possibility now arose that other Eastern European countries might be tempted to follow suit, with Hungary and Czechoslovakia among the more likely candidates. During that same month, the French and Polish communist parties put out a call for a pan-European communist party conference and the CPSU quickly seized upon this request in the hopes of reforging international communist unity and reasserting Soviet leadership within the communist movement. The conference was held in April 1967 in Karlovy Vary, Czechoslovakia, but it was a bitter disappointment to the CPSU. Not only did the Soviet hopes of turning this conference into a united front against Peking not materialize, but neither was Moscow successful in achieving a unanimous endorsement for its European policy line, inasmuch as six European communist parties -- the Yugoslav, Rumanian, Albanian, Dutch, Icelandic, and Norwegian parties -- refused to attend.⁴⁸ All that was achieved was the adoption of a collective document calling in general terms for a long-range exploitation of detente but suggesting

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 352.

by its very generality the already divergent political interests of both East and West European communist leaderships.⁴⁹

Ever since the fall of 1966, there had been a perceptible increase in Soviet-encouraged lobbying for a new international communist conference. The last such conference had met in Moscow in 1960. In October 1967 statements from numerous Soviet supporters resulted in the declaration that conditions were finally "ripe" for a "consultative meeting" to make "practical preparations" for such a world conclave.⁵⁰ One month later, invitations were issued for such a meeting and the stage was set for what Pravda foresaw as a major step toward restoration of "communist unity" with no attempt to "excommunicate" any party from the world communist movement.⁵¹

On February 26 1968, the preparatory meeting opened in Budapest with sixty parties represented, but a number of important parties missing; Yugoslavia had not been invited; China, Cuba, and Albania refused to attend; North Vietnam and North Korea stayed away, and four Asian non-ruling parties did not put in an appearance. The conference proved less than a resounding display of unity and after three days the Romanians, whose misgivings had been voiced in advance,

⁴⁹Kevin Devlin, "The Challenge of Eurocommunism," Problems of Communism (January-February 1977), p. 2.

⁵⁰Wolfe, Soviet Power, p. 354.

⁵¹Pravda, 28 November 1967, cited in Ibid, p. 355n.

pulled out of the consultative talks. They charged that the Soviets had violated their assurances that there would be no criticism of China and asserted that to hold a world conference under existing conditions of discord would "only flagrantly illustrate on a world scale the lack of unity between communist parties."⁵² When the Budapest session closed on March 5, it issued a statement ignoring the Romanian walkout and stating that a formal world party conference would be tentatively scheduled to be held in Moscow during November-December 1968.⁵³

This particular world party conference, however, was never called to order for quite suddenly the unexpected occurred. Early in 1968 the anti-Stalinist faction of the communist party of Czechoslovakia compelled the Stalinist Novotny to abandon the leadership of the party and the control of the state. Alexander Dubcek emerged as the new leader and became the rallying point, not only for communists who had had enough of Stalinism, but also for the reformist wing of the CZCP and Czechoslovak non-communists, all of whom supported Dubcek's program of pluralistic socialism. A decision had to be made in Moscow: the success of reformism in Czechoslovakia could spur similar developments in Poland and Hungary and would isolate East Germany. The Soviet

⁵²New York Times, 1 March 1968.

⁵³Wolfe, Soviet Power, p. 356.

decision, made after long reflection, was very sensible from a Soviet, and also an orthodox Marxist-Leninist, point of view. Much could be tolerated from fellow communists as long as the position of the Soviet Union was not militarily endangered and as long as the Leninist monopoly of power and conformity were enforced. This was the case in Romania. In Czechoslovakia, however, the communist regime was at stake, not just Soviet influence. Ceausescu was committing only a venal sin; Dubcek, a mortal one.⁵⁴

The leadership of the CPSU, acting on behalf of the Warsaw Pact, ordered the occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. This action not only shook Eastern Europe to the core and horrified the Western world, but also, more than any other issue, aroused and solidified the emerging Eurocommunist position and its opposition to the CPSU.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Salvadori, Rise, p. 134.

⁵⁵Triska, "Diversity," p. 31.

V. PRAGUE SPRING AND IT'S AFTERMATH

The basic conflict between the Western communist parties and the Soviet Union had existed long before the repressive intervention by the Warsaw Pact in Czechoslovakia. In varying but increasing degrees, as the foregoing discussion has demonstrated, the Western communist parties were taking the path of revisionist adaptation to their pluralistic, democratic environment; committing themselves to the constitutional pursuit of reform through electoral alliances and to the preservation of "bourgeois" liberties. This conflict, although obvious, was muted and restrained, due to habits of solidarity with the CPSU and an awareness of some convergent interests on other levels. But the events of 1968 were to dramatically alter this relationship. Indeed, the Czechoslovak crisis was to be a turning point in the international communist movement comparable to the expulsion of Yugoslavia and the Sino-Soviet rift.

The course of events during the Czechoslovak crisis is highly complex and an in-depth discussion of these events is well beyond the scope of this work. Most readers, no doubt, are already generally familiar with the Czechoslovak crisis, so the following discussion will deal only with several major issues germane to its impact upon the Eurocommunists.

The developments in Czechoslovakia after the January Plenum represented a direct challenge to the Soviets who, at that time, were in a mood of defensive conservatism. To the CPSU, this sudden liberalization meant a further weakening of the bloc and a marked increase of "ideological subversion", with the virus of infection coming not only from the West but from a communist state centrally and strategically located in Eastern Europe. To the Eurocommunists, however, the changes in Czechoslovakia opened up new and exciting prospects: here, at last, was to be a socialist society to which the Eurocommunists could point as a relevant example, without having to endlessly insist that their paths would not emulate the existing communist regimes. Although most Western communist parties were, at first, cautious, the PCI supported the Czech reformers from the very start⁵⁶ and were soon joined by the communist parties in Britain, France, and Austria.⁵⁷ The support of the PCF was a significant act for although the PCF had for years pursued revisionist domestic policies, they had yet to oppose the CPSU on a major foreign policy issue.⁵⁸ In April the Secretary-General of the PCF publicly pledged solidarity with the Prague reformers and wished them "great successes

⁵⁶ See L'Unita, 18, 23, & 25 January 1968, (FBIS).

⁵⁷ L'Unita, 27 March 1968, (FBIS).

⁵⁸ Kevin Devlin, "The New Crisis in European Communism," Problems of Communism (November-December 1968), p. 58.

in the application of their program aiming at the expansion of socialism."⁵⁹

As bloc pressure was increasingly being applied to the Dubcek regime, primarily by the Soviets, Poles, and the East Germans, the Eurocommunists, lead by the PCI and the PCF, began to play a growing role in the developing struggle. PCI General-Secretary Longo flew to Prague in May and after three days of talks with Dubcek and his supporters stated, "what is happening in Czechoslovakia today is an experiment which will also help certain socialist countries, and in particular the communist parties of the capitalist countries, in the struggle to create a new socialist society - young, open, and modern."⁶⁰

Eurocommunist support grew more outspoken and principled during the period of increasing Soviet pressures during June and July. Finally, on July 14, around the time of the Warsaw Pact conference in Poland which dealt with the "heresies" in Czechoslovakia, the PCI and the PCF sent a three man delegation to Moscow; the first time the two most powerful communist parties in Western Europe had taken a joint initiative against Soviet policies. During their talks, these Eurocommunists not only defended the Dubcek

⁵⁹ L'Humanite, 20 April 1968, cited in Ibid., p. 59.

⁶⁰ L'Unita, 8 May 1968, cited in Ibid.

reforms but also warned "the parties concerned ... that for us only a political solution was admissible, and that any kind of armed intervention would be unacceptable."⁶¹ Several days after the delegation's return from Moscow, the PCF proposed a meeting of all European communist parties to discuss the Czech situation and "the problems arising from it:"⁶² a proposal almost immediately accepted by fourteen European communist parties. Although this conference was never held, probably as a result of Soviet and Czechoslovak pressures, the proposal itself did two things: (1) it publicly established the Czechoslovak crisis as a Eurocommunist concern, and (2) it mobilized written and verbal Eurocommunist support for the Dubcek regime.⁶³

With the publication of the Soviet bloc's "Warsaw Letter"⁶⁴ on July 17, only fifteen of the non-ruling communist parties supported it (about one-fifth of the total). Out of the twenty-one communist parties in Western Europe, only four took a pro-Soviet stand: the Luxembourg CP, the Greek party (KKE), the West German KPD, and the West Berlin SED. The

⁶¹L'Unita, 10 September 1968, cited in Ibid.

⁶²Devlin, "New Crisis", p. 60.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴For the full text of the Warsaw Letter (and the Czechoslovak response), see New York Times, 19 July 1968.

two German parties were so dependent upon the Ulbricht regime that their alignment can be seen as having no political significance and, regarding the Greeks, only one faction of the KKE's exiled leadership endorsed the Warsaw Letter; the rival faction and the clandestine party apparatus inside Greece took a pro-Dubcek stand. In reality, support for the Soviet bloc Warsaw Letter in Western Europe was limited to the Luxembourg Communist Party with an estimated membership of 400-500 people.⁶⁵

As Warsaw Pact troops and armoured vehicles poured into Czechoslovakia on August 21 in order "to afford every assistance to the Czechoslovak working class and the whole Czechoslovak people,"⁶⁶ they also ran over the last vestiges of international communist solidarity. The Italian and Spanish communist parties were the first to condemn the invasion and they were quickly joined by the communist parties of France, Great Britain, Finland, Austria, Greece, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Romania, and even Japan and Australia.⁶⁷ The Secretary-General of the Swedish party went so far as to suggest that diplomatic relations between

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Jiri Valenta, "Soviet Decisionmaking and the Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968," Studies in Comparative Communism, VIII, Nos. 1 & 2 (Spring-Summer 1975), pp. 165-166.

⁶⁷Triska, "Diversity," p. 11.

Stockholm and Moscow should be suspended until the occupation ended.⁶⁸ However, when the invasion failed to produce a "counterregime" and the resistance of the Czechs demonstrated that the political struggle was not ended, but rather had entered a new phase, the Eurocommunists moved quickly from simple condemnation to direct and assertive pro-Czechoslovak action, with the aim of assisting the Czechs in salvaging as much as possible of the "democratization" program and in regaining as much as possible of their sovereignty.

The Eurocommunists were especially forceful in their rejection of Soviet-bloc arguments justifying the invasion and the occupation. "The arguments about tens of thousands of armed counter-revolutionaries, hidden caches of arms, loans from the West, moves to leave the Warsaw Pact ... and so on, have all been countered or refuted by the Czechoslovaks and can in no way amount to a counter-revolutionary situation," stated the spokesmen of the British CP.⁶⁹ The Eurocommunists also attacked the violations of "non-interference" as promised by the Soviet-bloc in their Moscow Agreement. In all cases, Eurocommunist opposition to the invasion was based upon principle — communist principle accepted by the entire world movement. The following PCF declaration perhaps best expressed this Eurocommunist perception:

⁶⁸Devlin, "New Crisis", p. 61.

⁶⁹Morning Star, 24 September 1968, cited in Devlin, "New Crisis," p. 62.

"In truth, the tragic decision of this month of August is wrong not only according to our opinion but according to our law, the law of the Communist parties of the whole world ... Who took the responsibility for the intervention? Not the Communist parties, since the French Communist Party, the Italian party, the very great majority of the 81 parties that signed the 1960 declaration, were opposed to it, as was that declaration itself, but some Communist parties, setting themselves up, on their own authority, as judges without appeal."⁷⁰

The invasion also forced the Eurocommunists to do more than temporarily disassociate themselves from the Soviet-bloc action. It also forced them to reassess their relationship with the CPSU and to repudiate both the theory and practice of totalitarian communism. Calls for such a reassessment came quickly from the Italian, French, Austrian, and British communist parties, among others. As a result, the Eurocommunists began to link the intervention with the "increased resistance of the political superstructure [in Eastern Europe] to the necessary adaptations and renewals,"⁷¹ and to the Soviet desire for hegemony in the bloc and its resistance to "ideological subversion" from any source.

Although the ability of the Eurocommunist parties to influence the Soviets was, of course, limited, they continued to attempt to bring pro-Czechoslovak pressures to bear upon

⁷⁰ Andre Wurmser, "Le mois Tragique," France Nouvelle (4 September 1968), as quoted by Devlin, "New Crisis", p. 62.

⁷¹ Rinascita, 27 September 1968, (FBIS).

the CPSU. The PCI generated an unprecedented round of interparty meetings, sending delegations to Paris, Bucharest, Sofia, Belgrade, London, Vienna, Moscow, and Latin America, in the hopes of coordinating the opposition to the Soviet occupation. Focusing on the long-planned world conference of communist parties scheduled for Moscow in November 1968, the PCI went on record as in favor of its postponement, stating that until the crisis in Czechoslovakia had been satisfactorily settled, it would "not be opportune or useful, or perhaps even possible" to hold the conference.⁷² Since the Hungarians, at Soviet insistence, had already sent out invitations for a preparatory meeting in Budapest in late September, the stage was set for a confrontation.

By late September, the Austrian, Belgian, British, French, Italian, Swiss, and Spanish CP's stated that they would attend the preparatory meeting only for the purpose of demanding the postponement of the Moscow conference. The Swedish, Norwegian, and Icelandic CP's refused to attend even the Bucharest session. At the same time, the Eurocommunist parties let it be known that they were considering a separate conference of Western European parties to discuss the crisis and its consequences. In addition, they also brought up the Czechoslovak issue within the World Federation of Trade Unions, since the invasion had "implications that affected

⁷²L'Unità, 8 September 1968, (FBIS).

the future of the international trade union movement and the very survival of the WFTU."⁷³

September also witnessed the first enunciation of what came to be known as the "Brezhnev Doctrine."⁷⁴ Sergi Kovalev, writing in Pravda dismissed the "formal-legal arguments" of "those who speak about the illegality of the actions of the socialist countries in Czechoslovakia" and declared that the socialist states could not remain "inactive in the name of some abstract idea of sovereignty when they saw how the country was exposed to the danger of anti-socialist degeneration."⁷⁵ Two weeks later, a similar article appeared in the Kommunist warning that no state could be "absolutely independent of the system of states in which it exists" and that "proletarian internationalism ... considers it necessary to guarantee the defense of any socialist state's sovereignty when it is threatened by the machinations of the imperialists."⁷⁶ To the Eurocommunists, this was tantamount to saying that the Soviet Union refused to recognize the sovereignty of any

⁷³L'Unita, 20 September 1968, (FBIS).

⁷⁴Brezhnev's name became associated with this doctrine after he expounded some of its features at the Polish party congress in November 1968, although by that time both Soviet theoreticians and other Kremlin leaders had already begun to spell out the doctrine in detail.

⁷⁵Pravda, 26 September 1968, (FBIS).

⁷⁶Kommunist, October 1968, pp. 96-97, (FBIS).

communist state within the reach of Soviet military power, since its enunciation left ambiguous the doctrine's applicability to previously non-communist countries in which the communist party might achieve power, by parliamentary means or otherwise. Construed to apply in such cases, even a "temporary" communist electoral victory in a European country would have to be regarded as irreversible. Since several subsequent statements by Brezhnev failed to set any territorial limits to this doctrine,⁷⁷ the Eurocommunists immediately condemned it and continued to widen the political and ideological distance between them and the CPSU.

When the Budapest "preparatory" meeting for the international communist conference was held in November, the Eurocommunists forced the Soviets to postpone this world conference until May 1969. Subsequently, another "preparatory" meeting was substituted for the world conference in May, and the date for the conference was put off until June 1969.

The aborted conference, however, was the only real success that the Eurocommunists were to savor in their fight for Czechoslovak "democratization." Gradually, it became apparent that Dubcek was being forced into one concession after another and new men, sensing the futility of

⁷⁷ Alexander J. Groth, Eastern Europe after Czechoslovakia, Headline Series No. 195 (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1969), p. 26.

continued struggle against Soviet power, were coming forward to help by quietly reimposing party and police controls and adopting a stance of cooperation with the Soviet Union. When anti-Soviet demonstrations broke out in Prague during April 1969, the CPSU dispatched Minister of Defense Grechko and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Semenov to the scene and threatened that additional occupation troops might follow.⁷⁸ Quickly Dubcek was replaced by Gustav Husak as First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party while other changes in the party's Presidium resulted in the return to power of several pro-Soviet leaders and the expulsion of a number of "reformist" members. Once the Soviets had restored a facade of Soviet-Czechoslovak harmony under the Husak regime, much of the ground for open opposition was cut from under the Eurocommunist parties. The damage, however, had already been done and the Eurocommunist parties continued to give moral support to Dubcek and his followers and routinely publicized their views and comments in the Western communist press.

The public anti-Soviet stand being pursued by these Eurocommunist parties not only engendered opposition from Eastern Europe,⁷⁹ but had domestic impact as well. Each

⁷⁸New York Times, 3 & 13 April 1968.

⁷⁹In October 1968 ideological polemics broke out openly, beginning with the East German theorist Kurt Hager's condemnation of the modern revisionist heresies of the Austrian CP, Italian CP, and other communist parties of Western Europe. (See Neues Deutschland, 29 Oct 68, pp. 3-6)

party's attitude became a source of internal disunity and in some parties, a large proportion of the rank-and-file and some of the leaders were outraged by the condemnation of the Soviet Union. The point should be made, however, that in no case did these critics succeed in altering a party's stand on the invasion and occupation. Jeannette Vermeerch, the widow of Thorez and a member of the PCF Politburo, was the most notable example of pro-Soviet dissidence and in October 1968 her objections were rejected by the PCF's Central Committee who quickly moved to accept her resignation from the Politburo and the Central Committee as well. The Eurocommunist parties' leaderships held fast to the position that the Czechoslovak crisis clearly demonstrated the Soviet relapse into Stalinism.

The invasion and occupation also led the Eurocommunist parties to strengthen their commitment to revisionist positions in domestic affairs in an effort to lessen the political losses inflicted by the Soviet action. These actions received greater attention after the Eurocommunists witnessed the electoral setbacks of the Swedish and Finnish parties. Even though both parties had condemned the Soviet and Warsaw Pact actions, their electoral support dropped dramatically in the elections held during the immediate post-invasion period; the Swedish CP's votes dropped by over 50% and they lost 5 of 8 seats, while in Finland the communist-front SKDL lost over 20% of its electoral support.⁸⁰

⁸⁰Devlin, "New Crisis," p. 67n.

At the same time, being communists, the Eurocommunist parties were led to formulate their differences with the Soviet and Eastern European regimes in ideological terms, a factor which made the rift even wider, deeper, and more enduring. In their efforts to gain more independence from the Soviet Union the Eurocommunists were stimulated to seek mutual contacts and support, and they increasingly began to use exclusively national strategies to reach national goals. Thus, the Eurocommunist direction began to be set, since cooperation with socialists and non-communists required even greater distance from the CPSU.⁸¹ As was indicated earlier, the conflicts within the communist movement were relatively restrained and muted prior to August 1968. Without any doubt, it was the invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia that provided the crucial jolt and thereby loosened the tongues of the revisionist communist parties, especially in Western Europe. The last major vestiges of an international communist movement led by the CPSU were, as the vindictive Albanians put it, crushed to death "under the chains of the Soviet tanks that occupied Czechoslovakia."⁸²

As the Western European communists began to recognize that international communist unity actually represented

⁸¹Triska, "Diversity," p. 12.

⁸²Zeri i Popullit, 8 October 1968, cited in Devlin, "New Crisis," p. 64.

Soviet state interests cleverly couched in the ideological term of "proletarian internationalism," their commitment to this "unity" quickly collapsed. The Yugoslavs, as early as 1948, had seen the concept of proletarian internationalism as merely a cover for Soviet domination of all communist parties, and by 1964 Togliatti of the PCI was calling it a "forced exterior uniformity."⁸³ The invasion of Czechoslovakia, in Triska's words, not only exposed proletarian internationalism as "Soviet great-power chauvinism and national egoism," but also resulted in the erosion of relations between ruling and non-ruling parties alike, adversely affecting their allegiance and participation.⁸⁴ By the mid-1970's, the concept of proletarian internationalism had lost numerous supporters. After the schismatics, China and Albania, the independents, such as Yugoslavia, Mexico, Iceland, and Holland, the neutrals, such as Romania, Vietnam, North Korea, Laos, and Malaysia, and the split parties, such as Canada, Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru, joined with the Eurocommunist parties and became heretics. Communist unity under the banner of proletarian internationalism is now almost totally dead.⁸⁵

⁸³New York Times, 5 September 1964, p. 2.

⁸⁴Triska, "Diversity," p. 14.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 20.

The sacred communist shibboleth of the dictatorship of the proletariat has met a similar fate. The Italian Communist Party never made use of the slogan and although many Western European CP's had incorporated the concept into their programs, they have gradually deleted it over the years. The British party dropped all references to it from its statutes in 1951, and the French stopped using it after 1968, although it was not officially proscribed until 1976. The Finnish party suppressed it in 1969, the Portuguese, for purely political convenience, in 1974, and the Spanish party did so in 1976. At this writing, the abandonment of this doctrine by the Eurocommunist parties is almost complete — to the utter disgust of the CPSU and other doctrinaire, ideological purists.⁸⁶

The early 1970's also saw the decline of the dogma of democratic centralism within the major Eurocommunist parties, most likely an outgrowth of the Eurocommunist rejection of Soviet hegemony over the movement and its denial of allegiance to proletarian internationalism.⁸⁷

Another victim of the schism between the Eurocommunists and the CPSU has been the Soviet model of socialism. The Leninist model of the single party socialist state run exclusively by a small, elite, tightly-knit, well-disciplined,

⁸⁶McInnes, Eurocommunism, p. 11.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 51.

dictatorial party was rejected in the early 1960's by both the PCI and the PCF; the Danish and Spanish parties followed suit later in the decade. By the 1970's, it would be reasonable to assert that virtually all the electoral communist parties, especially within Western Europe, have voluntarily disgarded the Soviet elitist party concept.

The Leninist notion of the avant-garde party, an active minority anticipating the direction of social change and forcing the pace by means of spectacular, possibly violent, actions, such as holding on illegally to power legally acquired, was also rejected by the Eurocommunist parties. The PCI and PCE had disgarded the concept by 1974 and the first real test of their sincerity came in 1975 when the Portuguese Communist Party tried to apply this Leninist strategy after its electoral minority was proven in national elections. The PCI and PCE immediately condemned the actions of the PCP and, after the Soviets threw their support behind the PCP, the French Communist Party also joined the condemnation and officially dropped the avant-garde party concept at its February 1976 party congress.⁸⁸

The climate of the post-1968 environment also encouraged an increased willingness on the part of the Eurocommunists to openly and consistently criticize the performance of the

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 18-20.

Soviet Union in the area of civil and human rights, and to extend that criticism to the regimes of Eastern Europe. Although originally low-key, the condemnations gradually became stronger so that by 1974, all the parties, with the one exception of the PCF, were criticizing the banishment of Solzhenitsyn.⁸⁹ The tactics of the Portuguese Communist Party during 1975, which smacked of Soviet-style illiberalism, were an embarrassment to the Eurocommunists, including the PCF, and when a BBC film on a Soviet labor camp appeared on French television in late 1975, the PCF joined the Eurocommunist ranks with its open and firm condemnation of the Soviet Union. By January 1976, the PCF/CPSU polemics had become so bitter that Marchais stated that he could no longer usefully meet with Brezhnev, as planned. Adding insult to injury, Marchais also commented that the PCF would continue to do its best to correct the misguided Soviet practices in these matters. Finally, when Kirilenko (from the Soviet Politburo) attended the PCF party congress the following month, the PCF denied him the floor.⁹⁰ Thus, the PCF fell quickly into line with the rest of the Eurocommunist parties in their opposition to Soviet and Eastern European political suppression.

On top of everything else, the late 1960's and early 1970's saw the Eurocommunist parties coming out in support

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 14.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 16.

of European integration, the EEC, and the continuation of the NATO alliance.⁹¹ In addition, the same period found Eurocommunist parties making solid alliances with non-communist parties. The PCF joined in a Common Program with the French Socialist Party in 1972, their common candidate, Francois Mitterand, almost winning the presidential election in 1974. Moving beyond the position he accepted in the Common Program, Marchais announced in 1976 that, in addition to advocating "democratic alternation of parties," the PCF would henceforth regard the dictatorship of the prolectariat as an obsolete concept.⁹² In Italy, the PCI, following the Dutch CP's initiative of 1964 and learning from the collapse of the Allende coalition in Chile, proclaimed that it would strive for an "historic compromise" with the Christian Democrats! The regional elections in June 1975 brought the PCI to within two percentage points of the Christian Democratic vote and made the "historic compromise" more than an academic question.⁹³

By early 1976, the disputes between the Eurocommunists and the CPSU had reached tremendous proportions and revolved, in general, around three major issues. The first was a classical issue in the history of the Communist movement: the degree of control Moscow was to exert over the other

⁹¹Ibid., p. 24.

⁹²Zimmerman, "Western," pp. 6-7.

⁹³Ibid., pp. 5-6.

communist parties. The second was the universal validity and permanence of communist dogma; were the concepts of proletarian internationalism, dictatorship of the proletariat, democratic centralism, the Leninist party model, etc., really obsolete and inoperative, or were they still valid for all communist parties? And the third major issue derived from, yet went beyond, the Eurocommunists' tactics: their verbal and apparently sincerely held commitment to pluralism and other vital aspects of Western democracy.

It was in this atmosphere of polemics, confusion, distrust, and struggle that the 25th CPSU Party Congress met and, later, the long-anticipated pan-European conference of communist parties was held. Both events, and especially the activities leading up to the latter, were highly significant and merit close examination.

VI. FROM MOSCOW TO EAST BERLIN AND BEYOND

In Soviet histories, the party congresses mark epochs in the historic struggle of the party for the building of the perfect society. According to the Soviet press, the 25th CPSU Party Congress was no exception; claiming that it "persuasively demonstrated the unity and solidarity of the international Communist movement."⁹⁴ Yet, underneath these boasts, the average Soviet citizen must have noticed that the congress had been, unlike previous congresses, exceedingly dull and without any fireworks. The adulation of Brezhnev appeared endless and universal and the only apparent consequential business was the naming of a new Central Committee, Politburo, and Secretariat. There was no indication in the press that the congress had found anything to be seriously wrong or that there were any problems. No mention was made of the bad harvest, the lowest in a decade, or of the general economic slowdown and technological lag. No new policies, no changes of party or governmental structures or rules were announced, nor was the succession problem addressed in any way. Not only was little decided, but the congress was not even used to bring up any possibility of change. It seemed only to reflect the desire of

⁹⁴Pravda, 25 March 1976, (FBIS).

the CPSU that everything must be for the best and should continue as far as possible without change. As Robert Wesson stated, the 25th CPSU Party Congress seems to have been little more than a formality, reflecting the latest stage in the evolution of vital revolutionary emotions into the placid, comfortable existence of a ruling elite for which social change is past and all questions are answered.⁹⁵

What the Soviet press, however, neglected to tell its readers was that the 25th CPSU Party Congress marked the first formal display of the scope, intensity and rate of differences and disagreements between Moscow and the Eurocommunist parties. Brezhnev, perhaps in anticipation of this dissent, had underlined the importance of proletarian internationalism in his opening speech and had criticized the deviant parties without openly naming them. Brezhnev's theme was totally endorsed by most of the ninety foreign parties in attendance. The Eurocommunists, however, in front of 4,998 delegates representing over fifteen million communist party members, took to the podium, as Jan Triska put it, to "profess, emphasize, and demand principles, policies, and strategies NEVER professed, emphasized, or demanded at a CPSU congress before."⁹⁶

⁹⁵Robert G. Wesson, "The Twenty-Fifth Soviet Communist Party Congress," Current History (October 1976), p. 129.

⁹⁶Triska, "Diversity," pp. 2-3.

The Swedish CP's speaker, Lars Werner, mentioned the right of each communist party to find its own special way. The British speaker, Gordon McClelland, went much further and outlined a socialist system far different from the Soviet, stressing plurality of parties, independent trade unions, religious and cultural freedoms and calling for the right of all communist parties to express differing views.⁹⁷

Georges Marchais of the PCF had refused to attend the congress and had sent Politburo member Gaston Plissonnier in his place. In his speech, Plissonnier was generally unprovocative but afterward he called a press conference in the Kremlin press center and declared the following: "The abandonment of the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat [by the PCF] is not negotiable ... We have not come to Moscow to negotiate ... As for proletarian internationalism, if this is reduced to a mere identity of views among Communist parties, it would be better to finish quickly with the rudimentary form ... The PCF does not share Leonid Brezhnev's assessment of French foreign policy."⁹⁸

When Enrico Berlinguer of the PCI took to the rostrum, he spoke of the independence of communist parties with their different views and experiences, of the necessity for understanding various progressive forces, and of the Italian

⁹⁷Wesson, "The Twenty-Fifth," p. 121.

⁹⁸Le Monde, 2 March 1976, (FBIS).

way to socialism including democracy, freedom for differing political forces, and the pluralistic system.⁹⁹

Santiago Carrillo of the Spanish Communist Party also, like Marchais, failed to attend the congress and instead, went to Rome for talks with Italian politicians, calmly explaining that this trip was "more important." While in Rome, Carrillo stated that Soviet socialism was "in the primitive stage," and Western socialism, when it came, would have to be profoundly different: "In the West we can have socialism only if the democratic and pluralistic systems are respected, and if it is based on majority consensus, with a readiness to give up power if this majority ceases to exist." Asked whether Moscow might condemn this idea of communism, he responded: "By what right could they condemn us? They can criticize us, as we criticize them. Condemnation is excommunication from a church, and the Communist movement was a church but now no longer is one."¹⁰⁰

In his concluding remarks at the congress, Leonid Brezhnev congratulated the delegates on their "unanimity" and Pravda proudly proclaimed that "the 25th CPSU Congress was a genuine triumph of proletarian internationalism."¹⁰¹ The Eurocommunist parties, however, had openly thrown down

⁹⁹Wesson, "The Twenty-Fifth," p. 121.

¹⁰⁰Devlin, "Challenge," p. 11

¹⁰¹Pravda, 25 March 1976, (FBIS).

the gauntlet and the challenge to the CPSU was to reach even greater proportions at the Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties held in East Berlin in June 1976. Given the importance and implications of this conference, the secret negotiations, drama and intrigue which preceded it are worthy of mention.

As indicated earlier, the initial calls for another pan-European conference — and for a world conference to follow — came from the Hungarian, Bulgarian, and West German communist parties in November 1973. Only after eleven months of secret interparty negotiations was an open consultative meeting set up in Warsaw; a session attended by twenty-eight parties in October 1974. Prior to this Warsaw meeting, the Soviets had high hopes for this second pan-European conference of communist parties. The conference was to address the "struggle for peace, security, cooperation, and social progress in Europe," and was to be held in East Berlin "no later than mid-1975." Linked closely with the Helsinki conference and the 30th anniversary of the victory of the World War II anti-Facist alliance, the CPSU hoped that the conference would produce a collective ideological interpretation of detente in Europe that would offset the Soviet bloc concessions with regard to "Basket 3" of the Helsinki Accords and, at the same time, reaffirm the status of the CPSU as primus inter pares in the European communist

movement.¹⁰² Additionally, the CPSU leadership and the influential personalities in the "loyalist" communist parties were looking forward to the reaffirmation of such concepts as proletarian internationalism, democratic centralism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the binding laws governing the construction of socialism, recognition of the leading role of the CPSU, and of the integral and exemplary role of "real socialism." They viewed the conference as supportive of one coordinated political, social, and ideological system throughout the Soviet sphere of influence, even to the extent of demanding a judgment of "treason" against China, and saw it as a first step toward calling a world conference and as a great opportunity to establish a program of action binding on all the participating parties.¹⁰³ The Soviets and their allies, however, were to be greatly surprised and sorely disappointed.

After the Warsaw meeting and the first proper preparatory session in Budapest in December 1974, secrecy descended over the proceedings. The reason for this was quickly clear. In discussions regarding the content of the conference's final document, the Eurocommunists, along with the Yugoslavs and the Romanians, were totally opposed to the Soviet and "loyalist" party aims. If there was to be a collective

¹⁰²Devlin, "Challenge," p. 3.

¹⁰³B.A. Osadczuk-Korab, "Brezhnev's Pyrrhic Victory: The Pan-European Conference of Communists in East Berlin," International Journal (Winter 1976), p. 180.

document at all, it would have to be based on consensus. The essence of the Eurocommunist position was that the concepts of proletarian internationalism, democratic centralism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, general binding laws, recognition of the leading role of any party, the priority of any specific "model" of socialism, the criticism of any party, present or absent, as well as the idea that the conference was to be considered a step toward a world conference, were all totally out of the question. The Eurocommunists and their allies not only insisted that the final document be binding on no party, but also that it emphasize the recognition of the principles of a variety of ideological and organizational forms for a party, of independence, autonomy, and sovereignty of each party, and of non-interference, as well as of the free exchange of views, of free discussion, and of mutual tolerance.¹⁰⁴ The initial debate over these points lasted until April 1975 and ended in deadlock when the East Germans presented a first draft document that was quickly rejected by the Eurocommunist parties and their fellow-travelers.¹⁰⁵

A group of eight parties (Yugoslavia, Romania, Italy, Spain, East Germany, France, Denmark, and the USSR) then met three times between April and mid-July in an attempt

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 181.

¹⁰⁵Devlin, "Challenge," p. 4.

to reach agreement. These meetings also failed when the East Germans presented a second draft document that was as unacceptable to the Eurocommunists as had been the first draft. The mid-1975 conference hoped for by the CPSU was now impossible and in August 1975, a PCI commentary in L'Espresso declared:

"both East German drafts contained statements of political and ideological principle that were frankly unacceptable - and not only to the PCI ... The third [chapter] concerns the strategy of the Communist parties, and here it is said that they play a vanguard role, pursue identical objectives, and are guided by a single ideology. We believe, and we are not the only ones, that these parts of the document do not reflect the reality of the Communist movement and the orientations that were expressed by its components on various subjects."¹⁰⁶

The eight-party group continued to meet during September, but with no results; it was obvious that the confrontation would have to be transferred back to the wider forum that had originally met in Warsaw and Budapest.

On October 9-10, a full group of twenty-seven delegations met and was presented with a third East German draft which represented significant concessions by the CPSU. The PCI regarded the draft as requiring "elaboration and clarification," but asserted that it could be "taken as a basis for discussion."¹⁰⁷ Based on the East German draft

¹⁰⁶ L'Espresso, 31 August 1975, (FBIS).

¹⁰⁷ L'Unita, 11 October 1975, (FBIS).

and the interparty discussions of October 9-10, it was agreed that the full Editorial Commission would meet in November 1975 to draw up a final draft. But this apparent Eurocommunist victory was short-lived, for in November when the Editorial Commission met the Soviet position had unexpectedly changed again. Instead of adopting a final draft and setting a date for the conference, the Editorial Commission decided on another December meeting to discuss the document and a session in January 1976 to "consider" setting the date.¹⁰⁸ Why the sudden change?

Evidently, the Soviets and their allied parties reintroduced their demands for a more ideologically pure document at the November meeting, demands that were rejected by the Eurocommunists. Quite possibly these demands reflected the desires of the Soviet delegate, Konstantin Katushev, who had replaced Ponomarev at the deliberations. Whereas Ponomarev was concerned with the international aspects of the movement, Katushev's interests were focused primarily on Eastern Europe. It is likely that Katushev did not approve of Ponomarev's previous compromises with the Eurocommunists and was striving to reassert ideological purity at the November meeting in order to strengthen his "control" over the Eastern European states. Additionally, it appears

¹⁰⁸Devlin, "Challenge," p. 7.

that the French, Polish, Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, and especially the Soviet parties desired to have the conference postponed until after their respective party congresses had met in early 1976.¹⁰⁹ Thus, the fourth East German draft went down to defeat.

The Soviets softened their stance again at the December meeting in which Vadim Zagladin, reasserting Ponomarev's previous position, indicated the CPSU's willingness to drop certain controversial sections of the November draft and to reconsider certain sections held to be essential by the Eurocommunists. Finally, a session lasting nine days in early January 1976 brought agreement on most of the text, but left the major issues unresolved.¹¹⁰ This fifth East German draft discussed in January clearly indicated that the tide was now moving in the direction of the Eurocommunists.

The remainder of January and most of February 1976 was devoted to various party congresses, but this fact did not deter the various advocates from continuing their pressures to bring the pan-European document into the perspective they envisioned for it. The PCF-PCI coalition, formed the previous November, continued to push for their version of

¹⁰⁹Morning Star, 2 December 1975.

¹¹⁰Devlin, "Challenge," p. 9.

the document while the CPSU had high hopes that their party congress would rally sufficient support to their side so as to frustrate the Eurocommunists' goals. As was indicated earlier, the 25th CPSU Party Congress was hardly successful in that regard.

Although another preparatory meeting was held in mid-March, it was not perceived as achieving anything conclusive. As a result, the Polish and French parties suggested the conference be postponed due to Soviet intransigence, but this move was rejected. Evidently Brezhnev felt that a postponement would expose the profound schism within the Communist movement and preferred to take his chances with a document he kept hoping would be improved to the Kremlin's satisfaction.¹¹¹

In early May, the Editorial Commission released a communique stating that the "final" commission meeting would be held in early June and that the conference itself would take place in the near future. But clouds were still on the horizon. A flurry of interparty diplomacy took place during the remainder of May, and in June the Soviets sent word that they were willing to discuss the Eurocommunist proposals during the conference; the reply came from the French, Yugoslavs, Romanians, Spanish, and Italians that they would stay home unless the CPSU accepted their proposals as the final document.

¹¹¹Tad Szulc, "The Stalled Momentum of Eurocommunism," New Republic (13 November 1976), p. 19.

The Soviets were trapped – and they compromised. In mid-June, Katushev flew discreetly into Bucharest and Belgrade bringing the word that the CPSU would accept all the demands which until that moment it had opposed.¹¹² The Editorial Commission adopted the consensual text on June 11 and adjourned until June 24. When they reassembled, it was to announce that the conference would take place on June 29-30. It was only on 26 June, however, three days before the conference was to open that the Eurocommunists had all indicated publicly that they would attend.¹¹³

It is indisputable that, with regard to the final conference document, the Eurocommunist parties achieved almost a total victory; a victory underscored by the unexpected attendance at the conference of the Dutch Communist Party, which had boycotted every one of the preparatory meetings. The text, based on the new principle of consensus, itself a formal recognition of the equality and autonomy of all communist parties, contained no criticism of the Chinese, dealt with political action and not with ideology, and was not binding on any party. The sacrosanct formula of "proletarian internationalism" was omitted, as was any reference to a special status for the CPSU or the USSR. It contained an emphasis on the communist parties' dialogue

¹¹²Devlin, "Challenge," p. 14.

¹¹³Szulc, "Stalled," p. 20.

and collaboration with non-communist political forces and, in effect, institutionalized diversity within the European Communist movement.¹¹⁴

More interesting than the final document were the speeches presented at the conference. The consensus apparently had altered little. The Soviets and their allies, having reluctantly agreed to the dropping of "proletarian internationalism" and the abandonment of special status for the CPSU, proceeded to insist on the continued validity of both. Based upon the content of the speeches, one could easily conclude that at present European communism is divided into two camps — the traditionalists and the autonomists. To the former group would belong the parties of the USSR, Bulgaria, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, the latter two being somewhat less conservative than the others. These parties are supported by a number of non-ruling parties including Portugal, West Germany, West Berlin, Luxembourg, Cyprus, and Turkey. The autonomist group is composed of the parties of Italy, Spain, France, Great Britain, Yugoslavia, Romania, and San Marino. Between the two camps lies a group of weak parties such as those of Holland, Ireland, Austria, Switzerland, and the Nordic communist parties.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴Devlin, "Challenge," p. 15.

¹¹⁵Osadczuk-Korab, "Brezhnev's," p. 192.

This open display of disagreement and dispute certainly made the East Berlin conference the first of its kind. The day after the conference, the PCF indicated that it was also most likely to be the last. Italian and Yugoslav communist leaders have described the conference as the "point of no return" in communist relationships.¹¹⁶ Also apparent is the fact that the Eurocommunist parties have made it clear to Moscow that they oppose any plans for a world communist conference and would not attend, even if the CPSU were to be successful in arranging one.

The Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties in East Berlin was a clear victory for the forces of Eurocommunism; they had come "eyeball-to-eyeball" with the Soviet Union over fundamental issues and it was the Soviets who blinked. The paramount conclusion must be that the conference in East Berlin marked the beginning, not the end, of the communist ideological struggle.

If the East Berlin conference demonstrated that the differences between the Eurocommunists and the CPSU were deeper and broader than were announced at the 25th CPSU Party Congress, the events in the post-Berlin period certainly reflect an even more rapidly growing divergence. Since most of the activities undertaken by the Eurocommunist

¹¹⁶Szulc, "The Stalled," p. 19.

parties since June 1976 are matters of recent history, there is no pressing need to detail them at this point. Several actions, however, are deserving of mention in that they highlight or underscore the direction the Eurocommunist parties have chosen to take.

Immediately after the East Berlin conference, the Soviet and Eastern European media clamped tight censorship on their coverage of the Eurocommunists' speeches, attempting to present the conference as a triumph of the "loyalist" point of view and as a reaffirmation of the unity of the communist movement based upon "proletarian internationalism." The Eurocommunist parties reacted quickly and labeled this assessment as a "falsification of the consensus reached in Berlin,"¹¹⁷

The death of Mao Tse Tung was seized upon by the Eurocommunists as another event that would allow them to emphasize their independence from the CPSU. A September 1976 article in L'Unita bluntly welcomed the fact that Mao's death had become an occasion for a "new rift between the Soviet CP and the great communist parties of Western Europe." The article went on to blame the Sino-Soviet schism on Soviet desires for hegemony, to criticize the Brezhnev doctrine of "limited sovereignty," and to assert that the aspirations of the Western European communists could only be achieved

¹¹⁷ Borba, (Belgrade) 14 August 1976, as cited in Devlin, "Challenge," p. 17

when Soviet hegemony over the lives of the parties of Eurocommunism had been shaken off completely.¹¹⁸

In early October, the PCF responded to a Hungarian assertion that all communist parties must perform the function of the dictatorship of the proletariat with the following retort:

If one considers that in order to install socialism in France it is necessary to have recourse to the dictatorship of the proletariat, as was done in Hungary (and also in the Soviet Union and elsewhere), [then] it is necessary to state that one must ban opposition parties, establish censorship, deprive part of the population of the freedoms of expression, association, demonstration, etc., and one must tell the French workers, "This is one of the consequences of what the Communists propose to you," because the dictatorship of the proletariat, no matter what its form, is exactly (not entirely, but exactly) this.¹¹⁹

After Berlin, too, the Eurocommunist parties increased their criticism of Soviet-bloc violations of the Helsinki Accords, claiming these intolerant actions also violated the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the final document of the recent East Berlin conference, and the constitutions of the Soviet-bloc states themselves. The PCI, objecting to the internal repression of the Husak regime in Prague, even broke relations with the Czechoslovak party — a gesture that the less rigid Eastern European

¹¹⁸Kevin Devlin, "Mao's Death Widens Gap Between Loyalist Regimes and Eurocommunists," Radio Free Europe Research Report, No. 196 (16 September 1976), p. 6.

¹¹⁹France Nouvelle, 5 October 1976, (FBIS).

parties (like Poland and Hungary) are loath to criticize publicly. The PCF also increased its attacks against Soviet treatment of its dissidents and when TASS criticized the French attacks as a "dirty undertaking", the PCF announced it would print seven million copies of Pierre Juquin's speech denouncing the illiberal treatment¹²⁰ and the PCI added that they would print six million copies.¹²¹ The PCI and the PCF also launched attacks against the Polish CP for its actions stemming from the worker's disturbances in the summer of 1976.

When, in November, the East Germans stripped poet Wolf Bierman of his citizenship and refused to allow him to return to the DDR, the Italian, French, Spanish, Belgian, and Swedish communist parties were quick to come to Bierman's support. L'Unita stated the Eurocommunist case concisely: "Our position on the Bierman case is extremely clear ... The punitive measure through which the authorities of the DDR decided to prevent his return to the country and thus to silence him in his own country is unacceptable."¹²²

The publication of "Charter 77" and the subsequent treatment accorded the signatories by the Czechoslovak government is still an on-going issue at this writing.

¹²⁰Devlin, "Challenge," p. 18.

¹²¹Szulc, "Stalled," p. 21.

¹²²Kevin Devlin, "Bierman and the Eurocommunist Comrades," Radio Free Europe Research Report, No. 241 (26 November 1976), p. 3.

Suffice it to say that the Eurocommunist reaction has been strong. L'Unita condemned the Czech government and stated that their action "leaves no doubt as to the spirit and methods with which the Czechoslovak authorities intend to confront the problems posed by Charter 77."¹²³ Rinascita asserted that "the question of the realization of democratic socialism in Czechoslovakia remains unanswered."¹²⁴ The PCE called the lack of freedom in socialist states "particularly scandalous."¹²⁵ In January 1977 L'Unita again commented: "Since 1968 there has been in Czechoslovakia a continuous fundamental political problem which we have denounced more than once and which we cannot avoid denouncing again today ... the CPCZ organ has preferred to resort to degrading labels and drastic threats rather than countering with arguments."¹²⁶ Probably the most scathing attack came from the PCE in February: "... our attitude toward the dissidents in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the USSR and the rest of the socialist countries is clear ... It calls the repressive methods used in these countries against the signatories of Charter 77 or similar statements the antithesis of socialist democracy."¹²⁷

¹²³ L'Unita, 12 January 1977, (FBIS).

¹²⁴ Rinascita, 14 January 1977, (FBIS).

¹²⁵ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 15 January 1977.

¹²⁶ L'Unita, 8 January 1977, (FBIS).

¹²⁷ Radio Independent Spain, 19 February 1977, Press Release reported in FBIS, W. Eur. (22 February 1977), p. N-6.

Finally, in an act clearly in violation of Soviet and CPSU authority, the PCF, PCI, and the PCE held a Eurocommunist "summit" in Madrid during early March 1977. In 1974, the CPSU had warned that no communist party had the right to organize a congress without inviting a Soviet delegation, neither had they the right to organize regional meetings of communist parties either.¹²⁸ But, in spite of this, these three communist parties held their "summit" and agreed that their parties should be known as "Eurocommunist" — meaning that they had the right to adapt communist tenets to the conditions of their own countries and to retain independence on the international plane.¹²⁹ Although the PCI and the PCF attempted to downplay the significance of the meeting, insisting it was not a party conference but merely an exchange of views between party leaders, the distinction was more one of degree than substance. The three parties had met, had discussed issues of national and regional concern, and no Soviet delegate was asked to attend.

Clearly, then, Eurocommunism is a reality and those parties which subscribe to the Eurocommunist view are not highly concerned about following the dictates of the CPSU. The Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was, without a doubt, the great

¹²⁸McInnes, Eurocommunism, p. 53.

¹²⁹New York Times, 4 March 1977, p. A4.

catalyst, but it was the 1976 East Berlin conference which institutionalized the current diversity and lack of unanimity. In reality, instead of attaining a personal apotheosis as he originally had planned, Leonid Brezhnev at East Berlin had to preside over something like a dissolution of his empire — and he dare not tell his own people what has happened.

VII. THE CAUSES OF THE SHIFT

It has been argued that the Berlin document and Eurocommunism in general are merely hoaxes perpetrated by the Western European communist parties on Moscow's orders in order to achieve domination in a changed political context. There are, to be sure, many contradictions in the positions of these independent parties and there may be valid reasons for continued Western skepticism over this new face of European communism. But common sense tends to militate against such extreme interpretations. The East Berlin document and the current inter-party polemics are the products of a communist evolution in Western Europe over the last decade or so; an evolution which has been punctuated by dramatic events such as the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia which these Eurocommunists have found repugnant and unacceptable.

Those who would assert that the Western European communist parties have not changed, that they still hold strong allegiance to Moscow, and that they are insincere about their commitments to democracy and pluralism usually base their case upon one or a combination of four major arguments.

The most common approach is the historical analogy. By pointing to the public comments and political programs of the Eastern European "people's democracies" during the 1940's, which turned out to be hollow promises and commitments, the

advocates of Eurocommunist insincerity would have their readers believe that what the Western European communists are saying today are merely repeat performances of the same tactical acts.

A second common theme is that the continued presence of pro-Soviet hardliners in the Eurocommunist parties demonstrates the continued presence of pro-Soviet attitudes within the party that will surface immediately if a Eurocommunist party achieves political power and control of government on a national level.

Third, the Eurocommunists' failure to formally break relations with the CPSU is regarded as proof of their insincerity and undemocratic character.

Finally, the Eurocommunist parties are regarded as untrustworthy since past Western experience with Communism adequately demonstrates their sinister nature, lack of credibility, and subversive techniques. Although, on the surface, these arguments appear to have some validity, a closer examination will reveal some critical, often fatal flaws.

Comparing the professed intentions of the Eurocommunist parties with those of the "people's democracies" of Eastern Europe after World War II is a very misleading analogy. It totally ignores the fact that the circumstances existing in Eastern Europe in the post-war period are in no way similar to those in Western Europe in the 1970's. In post-war Eastern Europe, the political allegiance of those

nations was ultimately determined by the proximity of the USSR and the presence of Soviet troops. In addition, the West could provide little more than verbal support to the native, non-communist political forces who, except in Czechoslovakia, were poorly trained and experienced in political democracy in any form.¹³⁰

In contrast, Western Europe is distant from the USSR and no Soviet troops are present within its borders. Not only can the West provide verbal support to indigenous non-communist political parties, but they can apply economic leverage as well in order to gain political influence; the experience in Portugal should suffice as an excellent example. Additionally, the non-communist parties in Western Europe are strong and are not emasculated as they were in post-war Eastern Europe. The interdependence created by the EEC, NATO, and the other transnational organizations and agreements within Western Europe also militate against a repeat of the Eastern European performance of the 1940's. And finally, since 1945 the Western European communist parties have participated in the national governments of eleven Western European nations and have managed or participated in the management of hundreds of towns and municipalities. In fact, a great part of their present appeal stems from their efficiency and integrity while serving on local and

¹³⁰Gati, "Europeanization," p. 544.

national governing bodies.¹³¹ Thus, although making for interesting reading, the historical analogy approach to criticism of the Eurocommunist parties lacks substance — it fails to address the political, social, and economic realities of present-day Western Europe.

The charge that pro-Soviet elements still exist within the Eurocommunist parties is, of course, valid, but the charge that they will emerge as the true leadership of these parties once they attain political power is simply fallacious. The old guard within these parties has virtually ceased to exist and the personal ties with the CPSU are extremely limited.¹³² Although those pro-Soviet elements which do exist within the Eurocommunist parties are vocal, they wield little influence within the parties' decision-making process. Even during 1968, when their numbers were much larger, the pro-Moscow faction failed to change even one party's official stand on the Czechoslovak reforms and the subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion and occupation. Even a cursory glance at the current programs and policies being pursued by the Eurocommunist parties should adequately demonstrate the absolutely limited impact these small, pro-Soviet elements have upon the political direction of the Eurocommunist parties. That these elements do exist cannot be denied, but to credit them

¹³¹Ibid., pp. 544-545.

¹³²Arrigo Levi, "Italy's "New" Communism," Foreign Policy, No. 26 (Spring 1977), p. 30.

with sufficient political power and popular support to assume the leadership of a Eurocommunist party smacks of a lack of objective assessment at best.

Many critics of the Eurocommunist parties have dismissed their liberalization as a charade simply because they have failed to formally reject the CPSU and break relations with it. In other words, the critics claim that only a formal break with the CPSU can prove the democratic character of the Eurocommunist parties. This criticism is both unrealistic and unfair. What these critics obviously would desire is a situation in which the Eurocommunists would adopt a pro-West, Cold War attitude toward the CPSU while the rest of the world operated in an atmosphere of detente and peaceful coexistence. To satisfy these particular critics, the Eurocommunist parties would have to be more anti-Soviet than virtually any other Western party. For many reasons, this is an unreasonable political demand.

First, an examination of the relationships between the Eurocommunists and the CPSU over the past decade or so reveals that a de facto break has indeed occurred on a myriad of issues and the Berlin document may reasonably be interpreted as a de jure break with the CPSU. The Eurocommunist parties have already rejected the Soviet model, Soviet leadership of the communist movement, Soviet interpretations of numerous communist dogmas and principles, and Soviet interference in the other parties' own roads to socialism.

But, the Eurocommunists are not about to sever, voluntarily, the bonds which tie them to the party and country of the October Revolution. As Timmermann points out, this relationship is not only a great part of their history, but also of their ideological, political, and structural identity; a relationship that the party leaders continue to regard as a necessary bulwark against the danger that their parties might simply become merely social democratic parties on the left of the political spectrum.¹³³ It is very apparent that, for political reasons, the Eurocommunist parties still desire some ties with the CPSU. But the fact that they maintain these ties should not mask completely the depth and breadth of their commitment to democratic principles, the extent of their liberalization, and their remarkable independence of Moscow, although this commitment, liberalization, & independence does vary from party to party.

The Eurocommunist parties are, themselves, aware of the problems these CPSU ties create in some quarters of the Western political scene. A PCI spokesman, Giorgio Napolitano, recently best expressed their position on this matter: "We could probably cut a good figure among many by saying that the Soviet Union is not a socialist country and then sever our links. But it would appear to be tactical and opportunist

¹³³Heinz Timmerman, "West European Communism in Flux," Problems of Communism, (November-December 1976), pp. 75-76.

and be seen as positions we took merely to achieve certain ends."¹³⁴ Thus, the formal rejection the critics of Eurocommunism seek is not to be forthcoming from these parties of their own accord and yet does not negate the relative impact of the massive differences which separate the CPSU from the communist parties in Western Europe. However, that this "formal" break may come from an opposite direction, i.e. Moscow, is an issue that will be discussed in a later section of this work.

Finally, the argument that Eurocommunism must not be trusted because of past Western experiences with Communism also suffers from a lack of appreciation of current realities. To assert that a communist party can change is less surprising than it at first seems. Throughout the history of the movement, communists have differed from one another, although Moscow usually succeeded in keeping these differences under tight control. Moscow's ability to do so now, however, is extremely limited and, in some cases, non-existent. Additionally, as Levi asserts, the roots of the present-day Eurocommunist parties can be found in the ill-fated historical experience of the people's democracies in the post-war years and even further back in the horrible sufferings of non-Russian communist leaders under Stalinism.¹³⁵ The

¹³⁴ New York Times, 20 February 1977, p. 3.

¹³⁵ Levi, "Italy's," p. 30.

Eurocommunist parties have also undergone a long period of democratic pressures, the "old guard" is a dying breed, and ties with Moscow grow more limited with each passing year. Soviet actions have alienated most Eurocommunist politicians and party members on numerous occasions to the point that Berlinguer himself has proclaimed that it would be easier to build socialism in the West than on the other side of the Iron Curtain. And finally, the Eurocommunist parties of today are not the communist parties of years past. They are electoral parties, run by generally moderate leaderships and supported by voters who have no intention of choosing anything remotely similar to the system currently employed in the USSR by the CPSU;¹³⁶ a situation strongly lamented by those conservative party stalwarts who still remain.

The Eurocommunist parties have indeed undergone significant change and there appear to be several causative factors which can be advanced to explain these shifts of programs and policies and to demonstrate the sincerity behind and commitment to the current political direction these parties have elected to take.

First, the general European environment in recent years has provided the Eurocommunist parties with unique opportunities for growth and adaptation. The policy of East-West

¹³⁶Ibid., pp. 30-31.

detente has aided in reducing the polarization of domestic politics stemming from the days of the Cold War and in bringing the Western European communist parties out of political isolation. Additionally, the Eurocommunist parties have benefited from the economic problems that have beset the Western European neo-capitalist model of development; problems the traditional ruling parties have been unable to adequately address.¹³⁷ It is also apparent that in Italy and Spain the Eurocommunists have not normally had to compete with strong Socialist parties for the support of the political left; a situation highly hospitable for Eurocommunist growth.¹³⁸

Given this political atmosphere, one would normally expect the communist parties to develop along traditional lines, espousing pure Marxist-Leninist doctrine, demanding radical solutions for social and economic problems, and rejecting completely the "bourgeois democracies" as totally incapable of serving the needs of the people. Surprisingly, however, just the opposite occurred. The Eurocommunist parties adopted programs and policies that openly rejected many Marxist-Leninist doctrines, pressed for moderate solutions to current difficulties, and even embraced the democratic and pluralistic system of government as the only viable system

¹³⁷Timmerman, "West European," p. 74.

¹³⁸Zimmerman, "Western", p. 3.

for meeting the needs of the people. These shifts were not merely tactical moves by the Eurocommunist parties but rather were strategic shifts of political perspectives dictated by national and international realities. At least five major factors appear to have caused these changes. A brief examination of each of them should serve to substantiate the sincerity of the Eurocommunist commitment to them.

Surely obvious from the previous discussion of the development of the Eurocommunist phenomenon in Western Europe is the fact that one of the major factors causing their political shifts has been the actions and activities of the Soviet Union and her "loyalist" regimes in Eastern Europe. The CPSU's treatment of Yugoslavia, Albania, and China did not go unnoticed by the Western European CP's, nor did the Soviet activities in Eastern Europe in 1953, 1956, 1961, 1968, 1970, and later. As the Eurocommunists gained in self-confidence, their criticism of the illiberal policies pursued by the CPSU and the like-minded parties in Eastern Europe grew more vocal and more frequent. The Warsaw Pact invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia was, without a doubt, the watershed in Eurocommunist-CPSU relations. Combined with increased domestic support, it dramatically influenced the Eurocommunist parties to turn away from Moscow's line. Heavy-handed Soviet diplomacy since 1968, designed to bring the Eurocommunists back into the CPSU's camp, has simply back-fired and has driven them further away

than ever. Repression within the USSR, Soviet-inspired repression within Eastern Europe, and the CPSU's failure to adhere to the spirit of the Helsinki Accords and the Berlin Accord have only added to the Eurocommunists' disenchantment with Soviet-style communism, as has Moscow's continual insistence upon the eternal validity of proletarian internationalism and other obsolete Marxist-Leninist shibboleths. The more the CPSU demands to be recognized as the leader of the Communist movement, the more independent and autonomous the Eurocommunist parties strive to become. Rejection of the "Soviet model of socialism" by the Eurocommunist parties is virtually complete and has been caused primarily by the actions of the CPSU itself. This disenchantment runs so deep that Santiago Carrillo of the PCE has even gone on public record as asserting that the Soviet Union is not even a socialist country but rather a dictatorship of one segment over the whole of Soviet society.¹³⁹

Another factor on the international level which has quietly, but effectively done its part in causing the shifts within the Eurocommunist parties has received surprisingly little emphasis or attention in the pertinent literature. This often-overlooked factor is that the United States is no longer on the moral defensive as it seemed to be, especially during the war in Vietnam. Rather, it would

¹³⁹New York Times, 20 February 1977, p. 3.

seem that the Soviets are on the moral defensive — the roles have been reversed in terms of general international perception.

There was a time not very long ago when America's friends and allies felt that they had to make excuses for their association with the United States. The Western Europeans, in particular, felt that many things the United States did were either foolish, unworthy or unwise. The general perception was that the United States backed bad causes while the Soviet Union backed good ones. But things are not like that anymore. Communist parties everywhere in the world outside the range of the Soviet armed forces, not only in Western Europe, are embarrassed by the actions the Soviets have taken against their own people and against the populace of Eastern Europe. For a long period of time, America was perceived as the ruthless and careless giant while the USSR was perceived in some circles as being more concerned with the welfare of people. This perception has not changed because of propaganda and no one has manipulated this change. It has somehow happened; Soviet propaganda does not seem to work anymore. It has somehow lost the power to persuade not only its own people and fellow-travelers, but the rest of the world as well.

Perhaps the American disengagement from Vietnam has been the major factor; the United States is no longer dropping napalm and bombs on "little men in black pajamas" trying to

hide in the jungle. The United States is not using its military forces against any nation that is smaller or poorer, nor is it attempting to coerce any nation against its apparent or alleged wishes. The United States can no longer be accused of backing old colonialism, nor practicing any new colonialism or imperialism.

There is, however, a fear of Moscow; a fear of repression, suppression, and coercion, of Soviet force wherever it is permitted to dominate, and of Soviet imperialism and/or aggression. Dissidence in Eastern Europe & the USSR itself has been increasing in intensity, as has Soviet-bloc reactions against it, and it is apparent that the Soviet Union is now on the propaganda defensive. It is quite likely that the Eurocommunists have turned away from Moscow, not only because of Soviet actions and activities, but also because of a realization on their part that the aims, aspirations, and political concepts of the West are not diametrically opposed to their own, as previously believed, but rather far preferable to those offered by the CPSU and the regimes in Eastern Europe.

Dissatisfaction with the CPSU and growing hospitality to things Western introduced a third factor within the Eurocommunist parties which has contributed to their political shifts. As Soviet influence fell, these parties turned more and more to the national scene for their political outlook and gradually deleted the concept of proletarian

internationalism from their party programs and policies – a move that had far-reaching impact.

As the Eurocommunist parties began to participate actively in their national electoral processes, they discovered the concept of proletarian internationalism to be little more than an albatross around their necks. The electorates increasingly demanded national communist parties offering policies and programs addressed to domestic needs; demands that forced the Eurocommunist parties to acknowledge that the ideology of one country cannot serve as the ideology of an international movement, nor as the ideology of another sovereign nation.¹⁴⁰ As the Eurocommunists adapted to these electoral demands, they discovered that their electoral support increased. Indeed, Eurocommunist responsiveness to the electorate's demands has increased largely because greater responsiveness has meant more votes. Now, like all political parties, the Eurocommunists have come to understand that electoral victories mean success and the electoral defeats mean failure – not only for the party membership, but for the leadership as well. Additionally, success at the polls means easier and greater access to resources – money, offices, respectability, prestige, and political influence – thereby untying the strings attached to aid from the CPSU. Therefore,

¹⁴⁰Triska, "Diversity," p. 17.

torn between their own needs and the demands of the CPSU, the Eurocommunist parties have had to choose and they have chosen not to give in to Moscow any longer, not without a fight.¹⁴¹ By departing from the Bolshevik party model and by no longer challenging national political processes, the Eurocommunist parties have ceased to be viewed as national adversaries. To return to "pro-Soviet" positions or to suggest continued allegiance to Moscow would be tantamount to committing political suicide and would virtually destroy all the political successes these parties have achieved during the past quarter-century.

Heavily tied to the concept of electoral support is the fact that the very structure of the Western European political system has contributed dramatically to the political shifts of the Eurocommunist parties. Unlike the two party system in the United States, the Western European systems of proportional representation have proved hospitable to the growth of the Eurocommunist parties. If they can attract a substantive vote, they are rewarded just like any other party. Thus, as the Eurocommunist parties shifted their emphasis to the national scene and away from the CPSU, as was most notably done in Italy, the leadership was able to justify these moves to its membership through virtually immediate electoral and political gains. Again, nothing

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 22.

succeeds like success and the continental political systems provide the fertile ground in which Eurocommunism could take hold and grow.¹⁴²

Finally, as the Eurocommunist parties altered their function within the Western European political scene, their structure also underwent profound changes. In 1975, Neil McInnes asserted that the Eurocommunist parties had a structure consisting of three major and distinct factors all in equilibrium; the party bureaucracy who benefited from the electoral road to power, the Leninist party members who still supported the CPSU and opposed cooperation with non-communist forces, and the Soviet influence itself.¹⁴³

Although this may have been the case in 1975, it is certainly not true in 1977. As Jan Triska correctly points out, "equilibrium" is a thing of the past and the structure of the Eurocommunist parties has shifted irrevocably in favor of the party bureaucracy.¹⁴⁴

Any objective analysis of the Eurocommunist parties would demonstrate the greatly reduced influence of Moscow and the CPSU. Additionally, such an analysis would reveal that "pro-Soviet" hardliners have either died or have been generally relegated to positions of low priority, low visibility, or low esteem. It is the party bureaucracy that leads, controls,

¹⁴²Ibid., pp. 27-28.

¹⁴³McInnes, The Communist Parties, pp. 140-156, 204.

¹⁴⁴Triska, "Diversity," see pages 28-29, 34-35.

and directs the activities of the Eurocommunist parties and it has been through their efforts that the Eurocommunist parties have been able to function within the parliamentary systems and to compete with other political parties for electoral support. The bureaucracy has realized that if a communist party gives up "revolution" and "proletarian internationalism" in favor of the electoral road to power it must win votes. In fact, except in a coalition, it must win a majority of votes to get into office. To do these things, the Eurocommunist parties need allies and to secure them, the Eurocommunist parties must downplay their major liability, namely their supposed loyalty to and support for the CPSU. Once an alliance is achieved, the Eurocommunist parties are forced to support that alliance in order to maintain their credibility, no matter how difficult the honoring of that contract might be. Most importantly, in order to justify these alliances to their members, the alliances must be successful and winning ones. Success means more jobs for the Eurocommunist parties and more jobs mean that the bureaucracy becomes even more influential. Thus, in order to remain in office, the party bureaucracy must vest its interest in national strategies and pay less and less attention to any Soviet/CPSU connections that might remain. The over-riding fact is that now that the party bureaucracies are in control of the Eurocommunist parties a return to the "Soviet camp" is virtually impossible. The organization and structure of the Eurocommunist parties would disintegrate and all past

gains would be destroyed. In sum, the Eurocommunist parties are captives of their own liberal democratization and political integration.¹⁴⁵

The evolution of Eurocommunism is far from complete, but it can be safely asserted that its rejection of the Soviet model, Soviet leadership, and Soviet ideology is sincere and that their commitment to the pluralistic and democratic political systems of Western Europe is not a sham nor a charade designed to cloak sinister motives. For all the concern that the Eurocommunist parties have generated in Western circles, it is of mild significance when compared to the concerns Eurocommunism has generated within the CPSU and the regimes of Eastern Europe. While some Western political analysts see Eurocommunism as a potential threat to NATO, the EEC, and possibly the Western European political system itself, it would not be unreasonable to assert that, given the economic and political strengths of the West, Eurocommunism can and will be integrated into the Western European political scene. To the Soviet Union, however, Eurocommunism represents a monumental threat, not only to her satellite states in Eastern Europe, but to the very legitimacy of the CPSU itself. An examination of the impact of Eurocommunism in Eastern Europe and the responses it has engendered will more than adequately demonstrate the depth and the validity of these fears.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

VIII. THE IMPACT OF EUROCOMMUNISM

It has become increasingly apparent, especially over the past decade, that the emergence of Eurocommunism has created a significant shift in the direction of initiative and influence within the world communist movement. For many years, the CPSU was the center of the communist world and all truth emanated from the Kremlin. Those persons or parties in conflict with the Soviet path were, if possible, simply purged or removed from positions of influence. If these tactics failed to achieve the desired compliance, the CPSU merely labeled the offenders as revisionists and/or traitors to Marxism-Leninism and publicly expelled them from the world communist movement; a tactic well-illustrated by the Soviet treatment of Yugoslavia and China. Thus, prior to the emergence of the Eurocommunist phenomenon, only Moscow held the political initiative and wielded the main political influence within world communism.

This one-way flow of communist methodology and ideology, however, is no longer the case. It was, of course, somewhat blunted by the defections of Yugoslavia, China, and Albania, but with the rise of Eurocommunism the flow was not only blunted but was to a large degree reversed. As the Eurocommunist parties gained in confidence and support they began to regard their conceptions of "socialism" not only as a national goal for themselves but also as an applicable

and valid goal for both Western and Eastern Europe, if not quite for the entire world. The Eurocommunist parties have gone far beyond simple criticism of single events in Eastern Europe and the USSR and are now engaged in actively promoting their vision of "socialism with liberty" as a necessary and viable vehicle of political change in Eastern Europe and eventually the USSR itself.¹⁴⁶

That this effort is a conscious one on the part of the Eurocommunist parties is perhaps best illustrated by Lucio Radice's comment to the press in late 1976. Radice, a leading PCI spokesman and a member of the PCI's Central Committee, linked Eurocommunism with the dissident movement in Eastern Europe and stated that it was "inevitable that the Italian, French, or Spanish "model" should become a political problem for the ruling communist parties ... one can no longer conceive of Eurocommunism as the regional variant of a strategy ordained by the official Marxism of the socialist countries. The truth is that there is a clash between two general perspectives. What is at stake is that relationship between socialism and liberty, and the way that relationship is worked out is equally relevant to the socialist and capitalist countries."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶Gati, "Europeanization," p. 540.

¹⁴⁷La Stampa, 8 December 1976, (FBIS).

Given the CPSU's reaction to Eurocommunism and the reactions of the Eastern European ruling elites, an area that will be amplified later in this report, it is quite obvious that Soviet ideological and political activities have shifted from an offensive to a defensive posture. The ideological "street" is no longer a one-way road and it may well be, as Gati would assert, that Eurocommunism has reversed the flow of influence and initiative and is challenging the very legitimacy of the Eastern European and Soviet regimes.¹⁴⁸

This shift of initiative and influence has had dramatic impact upon the Soviet Union in many ways. The Eurocommunist parties and their allies have forced the CPSU to face the fact that Moscow is no longer regarded as the hub of the world communist movement. CPSU primacy and leadership were successfully challenged by the Eurocommunists at the East Berlin conference in 1976 and the concept of proletarian internationalism was not even included in the final East Berlin document. It is interesting to note also that the East Berlin conference was adjourned even without the delegates raising their voices for the singing of the Internationale. No longer being acknowledged as primus inter pares, the CPSU has also had to face that controlling other communist parties as they had done before would be more

¹⁴⁸Gati, "Europeanization," p. 553.

difficult. Moscow certainly has not given up its efforts to exercise control over these parties, but the results of the East Berlin conference and other Eurocommunist activities have certainly reconciled the Kremlin leadership to doing so indirectly, if at all.¹⁴⁹

Eurocommunist political successes and their commitment to pluralism and Western-style democracy has severely undermined the greater portion of Soviet ideology, has set ominous precedents, and has caused the CPSU traumatic discomfort. The Eurocommunist parties have dismissed proletarian internationalism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the Leninist party model as "obsolete" concepts and have significantly undercut democratic centralism, the concept that virtually assured strong party control.¹⁵⁰ Their support of NATO and the EEC must have the Kremlin leadership deeply concerned and their endorsement of parliamentary democracy, political pluralism, and democratic alternation of political strikes a direct challenge to the CPSU's traditional claim to a monopoly of power. Indeed, the Eurocommunists' insistence upon democratic communism must seem like the idea of "fried snowballs" to the CPSU leadership, especially when one remembers that it was precisely such a

¹⁴⁹The Economist, 3 July 1976, p. 36.

¹⁵⁰Zimmerman, "Western," p. 14.

challenge to Soviet dogma which led to the invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968.¹⁵¹

Although the East Berlin conference was certainly their greatest success, the Eurocommunists have also affected the CPSU by their growing criticism of Soviet domestic policies — political repression, violations of human rights, actions taken against dissidents, censorship, the content of Soviet "social democracy," etc. Calling for independence and autonomy was one thing, but by attacking these internal Soviet policies, the Eurocommunists touched a sensitive Soviet nerve. Soviet power and prestige is, therefore, at stake, as is the legitimacy of the CPSU itself.¹⁵²

Moscow is painfully aware of the fact that the relationship between the Eurocommunists and Soviet dissidents is mutually reinforcing. The Eurocommunists constantly monitor events within the USSR and new developments in the West are not lost upon the Soviet dissidents, in spite of CPSU censorship. The dissidents appeal for Eurocommunist moral support and generally quickly receive it, along with a measure of Eurocommunist criticism of CPSU excesses. The dissidents in the Soviet Union firmly believe that the Eurocommunist parties support them and it is this belief,

¹⁵¹Morton Schwartz, "Moscow and Eurocommunism," Paper presented at the California Conference on Eurocommunism and United States Foreign Policy, La Jolla, CA., 15-16 April 1977, p. 3.

¹⁵²Triska, "Diversity," p. 30.

among others, that sustains them. The dissidents see the CPSU as sensitive to public criticism, especially from the French and Italian communist parties. "Keep up the pressure," said one Soviet dissident. "We are the ones who will have to take the effects. We will." "Keep speaking out," said a well-known Soviet physicist, "It might not be good for us here, but it will help Jews everywhere."¹⁵³ As Morton Schwartz accurately points out, the very existence of the Eurocommunist parties has created an "independent pole of reference" for dissident communist elements.¹⁵⁴

Additionally, there are strong indications that the CPSU is plainly worried that the unorthodoxy of the Eurocommunist parties could lead to the formation of an independent bloc of communist parties stretching from Spain to Yugoslavia, taking in some of the northern parties as well.¹⁵⁵ Should such a bloc actually emerge, the CPSU would face ideological attack from two sides, from China on the one hand and from the Western European communists on the other. It was basically this fear that motivated the CPSU to push for the East Berlin conference in the first place and, given the outcome of this conference, it would appear that the price they paid for the conference was too high and that

¹⁵³Christian Science Monitor, 29 Mar 1977, p. 19.

¹⁵⁴Schwartz, "Moscow," p. 4.

¹⁵⁵The Economist, 3 January 1976, p. 33.

they may have accelerated such an eventuality rather than have forestalled it.¹⁵⁶

The jolts that the Eurocommunist parties have given the CPSU to this point have, indeed, been dramatic and significant. However, they may be merely the tip of the iceberg when one considers the potential impacts yet to emerge.

A contingency for which Moscow is truly unprepared is that fact that sometime soon one of these Eurocommunist parties may come into power. If this party enters government, plays by the rules, and then steps down as the result of an election, the CPSU's claim that communism is on the march in Western Europe would be fatally undercut. If, moreover, this party would enter government and then be expelled for acting in a "Stalinist" manner, that event would give the CPSU a worse name, complicate its efforts for good relations with Western governments, and leave it with fewer assets in Western Europe than it started with.¹⁵⁷

To make matters worse, a Eurocommunist party that succeeded in holding power through democratic and pluralistic processes would be even more damaging to the CPSU. If the party fails, it is merely an embarrassment for Moscow; but if it succeeds, it may become a critical threat by offering to the entire

¹⁵⁶Osadczuk-Korab, "Brezhnev's," pp. 192-193.

¹⁵⁷Zimmerman, "Western," p. 14.

world an alternative to Soviet-style communism that could have far-reaching effects in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself. Should the CPSU fail to prevent a Eurocommunist infection within Eastern Europe, the Soviet empire would begin to collapse as the Eastern European nations began to alter their political systems to satisfy presently unfulfilled national aspirations and goals.

Indeed, even a partial introduction of Eurocommunism into Eastern Europe would be a profound challenge to Soviet theory and practice. The adoption of the Eurocommunist model within Eastern Europe would be seen by the CPSU as a grave threat to their survival for they would fear the gradual disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, the weakening of bi-lateral economic ties, the fading away of COMECON, the destruction of what is left of their ideological primacy and universalist pretensions, and the emergence of strong domestic pressures for similar reforms in the Soviet Union itself.¹⁵⁸

It is quite obvious that the Eurocommunists see this potential themselves. Carrillo, the PCE leader, has often spoken of a "Western reference point for the world workers' movement" to which the people's democracies in Eastern Europe would increasingly look.¹⁵⁹ In 1976, Carrillo flatly

¹⁵⁸Gati, "Europeanization," p. 550.

¹⁵⁹L'Unita, 1 November 1975, (FBIS).

asserted that, "communist participation in democratic systems in the West will aid in the democratization of the socialist countries of the East."¹⁶⁰ Even a cursory review of the Western European press would demonstrate that Carrillo's views are shared by the rest of the Eurocommunist parties. To assert that Eurocommunism has affected the CPSU is, in reality, a gross understatement. That Eurocommunism threatens the ultimate legitimacy of CPSU rule would be more in line with current realities and more descriptive of the Soviet perception.

The impact of Eurocommunism, although strongly felt in Moscow, has profoundly affected Eastern Europe as well. Although Eastern European reaction is diverse and subject to the amount of Soviet pressure and the leaderships' vested interests in each nation, it is apparent that numerous elements regard Eurocommunism as a viable within-system alternative to the Soviet model. This perception has gained ground simply because the concept is sponsored by communist parties with whom Moscow maintains comradely relations and because it has gained "legitimacy" in the world communist movement; a fact underscored by the outcome of the 1976 East Berlin conference. This alternative could prove to be a most potent foreign stimulus.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Zimmerman, "Western," p. 16.

¹⁶¹ Gati, "Europeanization," p. 547.

For some Eastern European countries, the concept of Eurocommunism has become an oft-cited source of justification and political leverage in their attempts to engender greater independence from the CPSU. Eurocommunism has also tended to reinforce the traditional belief that Eastern Europe represents a "bridge between East and West" and, especially in recent times, provides a half-way point for the eventual introduction of Western ideas into the Soviet Union. It is also significant to note that Eurocommunism is not an "ideological stranger" in this region. Its forerunner, national communism, was born in Yugoslavia and was attempted, not always successfully, in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania.¹⁶² Not only the masses, but also the Eastern European elites are drawn to Eurocommunism because they have found, through past experience, that international developments can and do influence internal change and, in fact, these elites have relied upon the international scene for pursuing their national objectives and thus modifying the political profile of Eastern Europe. The Sino-Soviet rift permitted Albania to evade Soviet domination and allowed Romania to diverge from the CPSU's international positions. The uncertainty projected by the post-Khrushchev leadership between 1964 and 1968 contributed greatly to the success of the Hungarian New Economic Mechanism and the initial successes

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 546.

of Dubcek's reforms in Czechoslovakia. Today, East Europeans are widely predicting and earnestly anticipating the effect of Eurocommunism on their region.¹⁶³

In assessing the impact of the Eurocommunist parties upon Eastern Europe, one quickly notices numerous conflicts and differences within the Warsaw Pact nations and other Eastern European countries. The Romanians, Albanians, and Yugoslavs are now anxious to promote and protect their own national "paths" to socialism; Yugoslavia has even adopted many of the foreign and domestic policy planks of the Eurocommunist platform. At the same time, Bulgaria, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia appear opposed to the Eurocommunist thrust into Eastern Europe and tend to parrot the perceptions of the CPSU. In Hungary and Poland, however, there appears to be a rather ambiguous approach to the Eurocommunist phenomenon which is suggestive of an intra-party split over the issue; loyalists maintaining that identification with the Eurocommunists would damage the relations with the CPSU and "autonomists" believing that across-the-board rejection of Eurocommunism would only engender instability and domestic strife at home.¹⁶⁴

The Eurocommunist parties' responses to the Eastern European regimes' treatment of their dissidents has also had dramatic effects. Letters and articles written by both

¹⁶³Ibid., p. 547.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

internal dissenters and exiled reformers constantly appear in the Eurocommunist parties' press organs and the Euro-communists' editorials and commentaries consistently decry the harsh treatment given the dissenters and fully support their calls for greater liberalization and democratization. Several examples may serve to illustrate the relative effectiveness of the Eurocommunist criticism.

In June 1976, Polish trade unionists appealed to the PCI to pressure the Polish government into moderating their stand against workers involved in protesting food prices. This pressure was immediately forthcoming and apparently successful. Adam Michnik, the dissident Polish historian, assessed the impact of the Eurocommunist parties' support in an interview in L'Espresso during late 1976 and stated that, "...we owe a great amount to the Italian Communists. Not only has their intervention helped to free many Polish workers from prison but it is also thanks to the PCI that people consider it possible to create socialism with a human face in East Europe or elsewhere."¹⁶⁵ Of late, it has also become clear that largely due to Eurocommunist pressures the Polish government has made some significant concessions in order to diffuse its internal strife.¹⁶⁶

The German Democratic Republic was profoundly embarrassed by the vigorous protests of the PCI over the murder of an

¹⁶⁵ L'Espresso, 5 December 1976, (FBIS).

¹⁶⁶ Christian Science Monitor, 2 February 1977, p. 34.

Italian truck driver (and a PCI party activist) by GDR border guards in Berlin. The Eurocommunists have also supported the dissident activities of Wolf Bierman and Robert Havemann. They were quick to condemn the GDR for stripping Bierman of his citizenship and are clearly presently involved in attempting to prevent the same action from being taken against Havemann. L'Unita has not only published Havemann's dissident views but also his demand for a "public guarantee from the GDR authorities" that he would be permitted to return to the GDR should he decide to visit Western Europe.¹⁶⁷ Finally, according to Wolf Bierman, "the Eurocommunists have encouraged dissidents to become more daring, less embarrassed, more courageous, and more clear-sighted."¹⁶⁸

The open dialogue between the Eurocommunist parties and the Czechoslovak dissidents has, without a doubt, been the most visible and consistent manifestation of Eurocommunist intervention in Eastern Europe. Needless to say, the roots of this relationship go back to 1968 and "Prague Spring" and the Eurocommunists have maintained cordial and supportive relations with the pro-Dubcek element within Czechoslovakia since that time. According to Michael David, an alternative to the official Communist Party of Czechoslovakia has grown up, known as the "Party of the Expelled," which looks toward the Eurocommunist parties for its justification. They, along

¹⁶⁷ L'Unita, 2 March 1977.

¹⁶⁸ Le Monde, 21-22 November 1976.

with other Czechoslovak dissidents, see themselves as sharing the purpose of the broad movement of European communism and look to the communist parties of Italy, France, and Spain for their allies.¹⁶⁹ Eurocommunist support for the Czech dissidents has been consistent and vocal and the exchange of polemics between Rude Pravo and the Eurocommunist press has been constant, and, at times, bitter. When Charter 77 was first published, Eurocommunist pressures upon the Husak regime resulted in moderate CPCZ reactions and it appeared that Husak was willing to take the Eurocommunists' suggestions to avoid actions that would widen East-West communist party disagreements.¹⁷⁰ Although this attitude was short-lived, it does demonstrate the remarkable impact of Eurocommunist criticism.

It is interesting to note also that Romania and Hungary have issued only placatory reactions to dissident activities. Romania's ties to the Eurocommunist parties are understandable, given its own autonomous goals, but that the Romanian leadership should be so quiet on the dissident issue may indicate their sympathy with and support of Eurocommunist principles runs deeper than one would at first imagine. This assertion gains even greater credibility when one considers that Radio Independent Spain (the PCE's clandestine radio station),

¹⁶⁹ Michael David, "The Czechs Look to Italy," New Statesman (9 July 1976), pp. 3-4.

¹⁷⁰ Christian Science Monitor, 24 January 1977, p. 11.

which represents the most vocal anti-Soviet and pro-Eurocommunist political party, has been broadcasting seven times daily over eleven separate radio frequencies directly from Romania since the mid-1950's.¹⁷¹ Hungary, too, provides radio transmission facilities for the PCE and has adopted a relatively neutral position on the dissident issue, although claiming Charter 77 to be an "all-European issue" certainly cannot be regarded by the CPSU as a neutral stance.¹⁷²

With the exception of Czechoslovakia, even in light of the Bulgarian and East German rhetoric, it would appear that Eastern Europe prefers to maintain a low profile on the dissident issue in general, leaving the greater part of an "anti-Eurocommunist" initiative to the Soviet Union. This attitude may not be simply a result of Eurocommunist influence alone; all Eastern European nations, regardless of their relative loyalty to Moscow, highly value the openings that have been made into the West in recent years and they know that these could be reversed by new East/West conflicts.¹⁷³

The Eurocommunist parties are also finding political allies in Eastern Europe, although their support varies from issue to issue. Romania joined with the Eurocommunists in threatening to boycott the East Berlin conference, in addition

¹⁷¹As reported by Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Washington, D.C. in telephone conversation with author on 5 May 1977. Data based upon 1974 BBC report.

¹⁷²Christian Science Monitor, 24 January 1977, p. 11.

¹⁷³Christian Science Monitor, 2 March 1977, p. 4.

to supporting the Eurcommunists' opposition to the East German/Soviet draft documents. Surprisingly enough, the Eurocommunist parties received East German and Czech backing in their demand that the East Berlin conference end with a declaration on civil liberties. Romania, naturally, supported the Eurocommunist call for clear party autonomy and all the Eastern European nations supported the Yugoslav-Italian draft of the conference's final document. While Romanian satisfaction with the East Berlin conference is not difficult to understand, the reactions of the Poles and the Hungarians is quite surprising. Both parties have openly stated that "each party is free to interpret the document as it sees fit" (a view not shared by Moscow) and the Poles feel so attracted to the Eurocommunists that they believe that they have much to gain from "exchanges of experiences" with the Western European communist parties.¹⁷⁴ It is also noteworthy that neither Poland nor Hungary has yet seen fit to publicly criticize the PCI for breaking relations with the Husak regime in Czechoslovakia. In fact, Kadar's position on Eurocommunism in general must be causing severe tremors inside the Kremlin walls. Janos Kadar has not only publicly disagreed with the

know their own conditions best.¹⁷⁵ The prevalent view among long-time Eastern European observers is that "the Hungarians are playing footsie under the table with the Italian comrades and the other Eurocommunists but are afraid of being caught by Moscow."¹⁷⁶ Additionally, a communist theoretician in Budapest recently noted that "the current experiments of the Italian comrades — autonomy from Moscow and cooperation with bourgeois parties — appeal to Kadar, although he will never even concede that Eurocommunism exists."¹⁷⁷ The "infection" of Eurocommunism is also evident in the Hungarian press. Various party press organs have conceded that individual parties have different roads to socialism and that there can be no leading "center" (that is, Moscow) or outside interference in internal affairs. A classic line from a recent issue of Nepszabadsag must have caused deep concern within the CPSU. "Obviously," the article concluded, "in capitalist countries with a developed industrial base, socialism will be obtained by different methods from those adopted by Lenin in backward Russia."¹⁷⁸

The point of the preceding examples and the discussion which accompanied them should be obvious, but, should the

¹⁷⁵Christian Science Monitor, 9 March 1977, p. 9.

¹⁷⁶New York Times, 24 April 1974, p. 12.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

¹⁷⁸Christian Science Monitor, 9 March 1977, p. 9.

gravity of the Eurocommunist impact upon the Soviet-bloc nations have escaped the reader, a brief review of its major elements might at this point be extremely useful.

In reference to Eastern Europe, it is possible to discern that numerous elements, including some of the ruling elites, see Eurocommunism as a viable model for socialist development in their own countries. Many political forces within Eastern Europe are using Eurocommunism as a justification in their search for more independence from Moscow; in some cases suggesting a splitting of the communist party involved into "loyalist" and "autonomist" factions. Eurocommunist support for Eastern European dissidents is strong and consistent and the Western European communist parties have become a "touchstone" for the dissidents themselves. Because of the freedom of access the Eurocommunist parties enjoy in Eastern Europe, the dissidents are able to contact them almost directly and at will and thus get their points of view published in the West, being denied that right in the East. Numerous Eastern European regimes have been supportive of Eurocommunist goals, aspirations, and criticisms, although this support varies from issue to issue. Several Eastern European regimes also supported the Eurocommunist positions prior to and at the 1976 East Berlin conference and it has become glaringly apparent that there are obvious differences within the bloc towards not only the Eurocommunist parties but also the concept of Eurocommunism as well. All of these activities are all the more remarkable

when one realizes that they have taken place in a region highly accessible to the KGB and well within the reach of Soviet bayonets.

The Eurocommunist impact upon the Soviet Union has been no less severe. The Western European communist parties, especially the PCI, PCE, and the PCF have managed to reverse the flow of communist initiative and influence within the world communist movement. The flow is now West to East, not East to West, and the CPSU has been forced onto the ideological defensive. The Eurocommunist parties have successfully challenged the CPSU's leadership and primacy, formalized and institutionalized diversity and autonomy within the communist movement, and have gone on record as being opposed to any international communist conference, thus short-circuiting a long-desired Soviet objective. They have made direct control of a communist party by Moscow an unjustifiable act, undermined much of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, and have dismissed the Soviet model of socialism as not only obsolete but also as "incorrect." The Eurocommunist parties have openly criticized Soviet domestic policies and have lent comradely support to Soviet dissidents. Their activities across the board have caused the CPSU to regard the formation of a Eurocommunist bloc from Spain to Yugoslavia as a real possibility; a situation that would place the CPSU in the position of having to wage a two-front ideological war -- against China in the East and against the Eurocommunists in the West. Most critical of all is the fact

that the CPSU has become aware that Eurocommunism can and does offer an alternate model to Soviet-style totalitarian communism. If this new model were to be introduced into Eastern Europe, the Soviets might well be faced with a weakened Warsaw Pact, greatly diluted bi-lateral economic ties with Eastern Europe, the eventual termination of COMECON, a massive loss of prestige, influence, and whatever is left of the CPSU's leadership pretensions, and finally, strong and vocal domestic pressure for similar reforms within the Soviet Union itself.

All this being considered, it just may be that Victor Zorza was not exaggerating when he wrote the following lines in 1975:

"Those Soviet leaders who seem bent on picking quarrels with European communists are not cutting off their noses to spite their own faces. They see West European communists as a greater menace to the Soviet system than any political threat posed to it by Western capitalism."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹Washington Post, 5 November 1975.

IX. REACTION AND RESPONSE IN EASTERN EUROPE
AND THE USSR

Given the magnitude of the challenge posed by the Euro-communist parties and their "revisionist" ideologies, it should come as no surprise that the Soviet-bloc regimes have, for years, sought to negate both its internal and external effects. What is surprising, however, is that the Eastern European and Soviet reaction and response has been largely ineffective and, in some cases, even counter-productive. While it is impossible to detail the entire spectrum of the Soviet-bloc response, what follows is an attempt to highlight its general direction and political substance.

Prior to the emergence of Eurocommunism, Moscow could deal with challenges to itself by simply liquidating the offending persons or parties, by forcefully bringing the party to heel, or by insisting that the recalcitrant party sacrifice its own interests to the requirements of Soviet policy. Internally and within Eastern Europe these tactics worked generally well and in the two cases they did not, Yugoslavia and Albania, the offending parties were merely expelled with the sure knowledge that they would either return to the fraternal fold or would wither and die in diplomatic, economic and political isolation. During the era of the Comintern and Cominform, the Western European communist parties were under direct Soviet control and, in line with

the CPSU's historical interest in the spread of socialism beyond Soviet territory, these parties were encouraged to make some ideological and tactical compromises in order to take better advantage of domestic political opportunities. They entered into united fronts, popular fronts, and national fronts; into all sorts of alliances with non-communists. Indeed, Moscow did not object to these moves and in fact Khrushchev's suggestion that they follow this course was made public at the 20th CPSU party congress in 1956. Khrushchev's pronouncements at that congress sent shock waves throughout the communist movement and touched off a decade of doubt and indecision for the Western European communist parties; instead of beginning a revolution, the Western CP's had one forced upon them.¹⁸⁰

Although most Western communist parties exercised caution and recognized that Khrushchev's speech could only lead to polycentrism and splittism, the PCI, under Togliatti, recognized the situation as an opportunity rather than a threat. A short four months after the 20th CPSU party congress Togliatti shocked the CPSU with the following comment: "The Soviet model cannot and must not any longer be considered obligatory ... The whole system is becoming polycentric, and even in the Communist movement itself we cannot speak

¹⁸⁰William McLaughlin, "Stalinism, and the Western CP's: Ten Years After," Radio Free Europe Research Report, No. 226 (24 February 1966), pp. 3-4.

of a single guide ... It will be up to us to work out our own method and life..."¹⁸¹ While the British, Dutch, Danish, and Luxembourg CP's initially questioned Togliatti's initiative, it was immediately praised by the Belgian and Finnish communist parties. Khrushchev's speech, along with the impact of the Hungarian revolt, was beginning to cause splits in Western communist parties; machinery of authority was breaking down and many vested interests were being threatened. The CPSU reacted to these developments on 30 June 1956 by issuing a statement intended to deal with "our friends abroad who are not completely clear on the question of the personality cult ..." ¹⁸² The statement went on to say that, "in particular one cannot agree with the question posed by Comrade Togliatti as to whether Soviet society may have reached certain forms of degeneration ... the Comintern and Cominform have ceased their activities, but it does not follow from this, however, that international solidarity and the need for contacts among revolutionary fraternal parties have lost their significance." ¹⁸³ It is significant to note that even at this early date, June 1956, the CPSU recognized the main threat to its own position among the Western parties: polycentrism, autonomy, and revisionism were under attack.

¹⁸¹Nuovi Argomenti, 16 June 1956, cited in Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁸²Pravda, 2 July 1956, cited in Ibid.

¹⁸³Ibid.

Although the CPSU managed to prevent open controversy throughout the next five years, the debates within the Western European parties still went on in smoke-filled rooms. Togliatti's heresy surfaced again in 1961, assisted by the Sino-Soviet rift, the Soviet-Albanian rift, and Moscow's confused policy toward the international communist movement in general. Togliatti now publicly asserted that "polycentrism has become a necessity,"¹⁸⁴ and, this time, Moscow was unable to contain open debate; the umbilical cord to Moscow had been cut and no CPSU statement could repair the gathering damage.

Faced with the fact that verbal admonishments were no longer effective in silencing "dissent," the CPSU quickly fell back on its Comintern and Cominform experience and attempted to "organize" revisionism out of the world communist movement; a tactic that was doomed in advance due to increasing pluralism and growing assertions of autonomy by individual communist parties. The CPSU managed to arrange two meetings of all the parties, one in November 1957, and another in November and December 1960. In both cases, however, they were ended with joint statements either trivial or deceptive. The November 1957 meeting agreed only to a joint "informational" monthly publication and in 1958, Prague began to publish Problems of Peace and Socialism (known as World

¹⁸⁴L'Unita, 12 November 1961, cited in Ibid, p. 5.

Marxist Review in the West). In 1960, the meeting simply backed Khrushchev's request to drop the special status accorded to the CPSU as primus responsible for the conduct of all parties. Beyond these activities, all Soviet efforts to establish an all-communist organization or international secretariat during the Khrushchev period failed. Calls for a world communist conference continued throughout the early 1960's, but were opposed not only by the Chinese, but also by the "neutralists" as well as the "revisionists" and "autonomists" in the West. Finally, in 1964, Khrushchev managed to get a drafting commission together to prepare for a world conference of communist parties. However, before it could meet Khrushchev was removed from power and his successors postponed the meeting.¹⁸⁵

Brezhnev managed to assemble this drafting commission in Moscow during March 1965, but it was more of a defeat than a victory. The weak resolution it adopted was in reality an admission of its inability to agree on anything and in true Marxist-Leninist tradition Brezhnev attempted to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse by declaring that among communists "there can be different approaches to the solution of these or other specific problems, differing

¹⁸⁵ Alexander Dallin, "The USSR and World Communism," in The Soviet Union under Brezhnev and Kosygin, John W. Strong, ed., New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1971, pp. 217-218.

interests on these or other concrete questions of internal or foreign policy."¹⁸⁶

Between 1965 and 1967, the CPSU continued to make attempts at setting up another international communist conference, but these attempts, too, were futile. One effort was made to get such a conference together to support "united action" on behalf of North Vietnam. The CPSU encouraged the Polish and French CP's to send out invitations, but the North Vietnamese themselves refused to attend and the idea collapsed. After the cultural revolution began in China, the CPSU issued another call for an international conference at the Bulgarian party's congress in November 1966. But again, the call was in vain; only the CPSU and the Czech and French parties supported the idea, and it was opposed or ignored by nine ruling communist parties.¹⁸⁷

As indicated earlier, the CPSU did manage to get a pan-European conference into session during April 1967 at Karlovy Vary, Czechoslovakia. Called in hope of strengthening international communist unity and reasserting CPSU leadership, the conference was more of a setback than a success. It produced no condemnation of China, no united support of the CPSU's European policy, and six European parties actually refused to attend.

¹⁸⁶Pravda, 9 April 1965, cited in Ibid., p. 219.

¹⁸⁷New York Times, 17 & 21 November 1966.

In late 1967, it appeared that after long and difficult Soviet efforts an international conference would take place in 1968. Although numerous preparatory meetings were held, Soviet desires to reestablish "unity" in the international movement under the "leadership" of the CPSU were irrevocably crushed by the international reaction to the Soviet-inspired Warsaw Pact invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

By 1968 it was obvious that the CPSU had been unable to find a formula for dealing with international communism. They had failed to organize the movement, failed to rally the various parties behind joint action programs, failed to make proletarian internationalism or the Leninist party model palatable to many of the parties, and failed to stop the gradual erosion of Soviet initiative and influence. Given these failures, it is not surprising that the CPSU, in its search for cheap means to reassert its influence, began to reluctantly acknowledge differences within the communist movement. Between roughly 1964 and 1968 the CPSU tended to close its eyes to the activities of some parties in exchange for their solidarity with the Soviet Union. Thus, Moscow chose not to debate the PCI, not to criticize Castro, and not to actively reject the substance of programs and policies initiated by Ceausescu in Romania. This meant a blurring of ideological positions in exchange for international support and with each compromise made by the CPSU

its negotiating position became further and further weakened.¹⁸⁸

Although Moscow was willing to accept some deviations, other deviations were clearly unacceptable. Unfortunately, Moscow's control within Eastern Europe was slipping; "bloc" integration had failed; Stalinist Gleichschaltung had failed; economic, ideological, and military pressures had failed; and Yugoslavia and Albania were already outside the camp and Romania was demonstrably independent. To make matters worse, Hungary and Czechoslovakia were initiating economic and political reforms and Poland was preoccupied with internal dissent and economic problems. Because of all this, the CPSU adopted a stance opposing any change within the ruling communist regimes and initiated a policy opposing liberalization in domestic affairs as well. Soviet apprehension grew throughout the mid-1960's and this attitude was reflected in the CPSU's response to the dismissal of Rankovic in Yugoslavia, the growing tension with Romania during 1966-1968, and most dramatically in the confrontation with the Dubcek regime in the fall of 1968.¹⁸⁹

During the first three months of 1968, the CPSU was relatively silent on the Czechoslovak developments and the declarations of support Dubcek was receiving from the Euro-communist parties. This silence was probably due to

¹⁸⁸Dallin, "The USSR," pp. 219-220.

¹⁸⁹Ibid.

misgivings as to what course to follow, a desire to isolate the Soviet population from the unrest in Eastern Europe, and a prudent decision not to exacerbate that unrest by critical public comment from Moscow. In late March, however, the dam broke and a domestic propaganda campaign began. Pravda began to stress the need for vigilance against "bourgeois" and other unhealthy outside influences¹⁹⁰ and later ran an article aimed directly at the Eurocommunist demands that Czech liberalization should be allowed to continue unimpeded. This article asserted that "ideological saboteurs are displaying particular zeal in their effort to present in a false light the nature of relations between the CPSU and the CZCP, resorting to the hackneyed device of Soviet interference."¹⁹¹ At the same time, the East German and Polish parties began their open criticism of Dubcek and his supporters.

The propaganda attacks were stepped up during April and May and revolved around the general theme of "antisocialist" elements in Czechoslovakia being exploited by the West to sow discord within the Warsaw bloc. In June, an article again appeared in Pravda entitled "Marxism and Leninism: One and Indivisible." A brief look at some of its content is illustrative of the fact that the attack was not only

¹⁹⁰Pravda, 14 March 1968, (FBIS).

¹⁹¹Pravda, 28 March 1968, (FBIS).

against Dubcek, but the "revisionist" Eurocommunist parties as well:

"The bourgeoisie and its ideologists and politicians continue to sing the same old song that Marxism is a 19th-century theory, that it is out-dated, has entered into conflict with reality and is undergoing profound crisis ... Attempts to present a different, non-Leninist interpretation of Marxism have become the vogue among present-day revisionists... The revisionists howl against the monolithism of Marxism... seek to break up Marxism into national compartments...and are trying to give a theoretical basis to an anti-internationalist policy that is aimed at splitting the world Communist movement.

We have struggled and must continue to struggle against those who advocate opportunism, some sort of bourgeois philosophic system or eclectic combination, tolerance and conciliation toward bourgeois ideology, and a diffuse mishmash of scraps and borrowings from bourgeois theories."¹⁹²

In early July, the CPSU launched an attack against the publication of "The 2,000 Words," labeling it a call for counterrevolution. In criticizing the Western supporters of this document, among whom were the Eurocommunists, the CPSU claimed that its supporters were "the same people who have more than once called for putting an end to the CZCP's guiding role and for returning to a democracy ... who are seeking to present the 2,000 words as the last word of some sort of socialist democracy."¹⁹³

¹⁹²Pravda, 14 June 1968, (FBIS).

¹⁹³Pravda, 11 June 1968, (FBIS).

Since the majority of the Eurocommunist parties, along with the Yugoslavs and the Romanians, strongly supported Dubcek, and since the CPSU leadership was still divided on a course of action, the CPSU Politburo agreed to meet directly with the Politburo of the CZCP in late July – an act unprecedented in the history of the communist movement.¹⁹⁴ Not only had Eurocommunist pressures helped to force this meeting, but also they had decidedly influenced Suslov and Ponomarev, both of whom at this point were committed to a political solution of the Czech crisis. Suslov's motivation for such a solution was made apparent directly after this meeting when he commented: "The Czechoslovak question must be settled by agreement if great harm is not to ensue for the international Communist movement and its unity."¹⁹⁵

As the Warsaw Pact forces roared into Czechoslovakia in August, the Soviet-bloc press organs loudly proclaimed wide international communist support for the "fraternal assistance." At no point did these press organs take public note of the condemnations coming from the Eurocommunist and other parties throughout the world. Although there was some muted criticism of the Eurocommunist position throughout August and September, it was of a general nature. An excellent example of this approach is Sergei Kovalev's article in Pravda:

¹⁹⁴Valenta, "Soviet-Decisionmaking," p. 167.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 168.

"It is impossible to ignore the allegations being heard in some places that the actions of the five socialist countries contradict the Marxist-Leninist principle of sovereignty and the right of the nations to self-determination ... Such arguments are untenable...socialist countries and Communist parties have and must have freedom to determine their country's path of development. However, any decision of theirs must damage neither socialism in their own country, nor the fundamental interests of the other socialist countries, nor the worldwide workers movement...Whoever forgets this is placing sole emphasis on the autonomy and independence of Communist parties, lapsing into one-sidedness, and shirking his internationalist obligations...

Each Communist party is free to apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialism in its own country, but it cannot deviate from these principles (if, of course, it remains a Communist party)...

There is no doubt that the actions taken in Czechoslovakia by the five allied socialist countries will be increasingly supported by all who really value the interests of the present-day revolutionary movement, the peace and security of peoples, democracy, and socialism."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Pravda, 26 September 1968... Upon reading Kovalev's justification, it is ironic that the invasion also coincided with the publication of a book in the USSR claiming the CPSU was a proponent of diversity within the bloc and that military pressure against another socialist state was unthinkable. To quote: "Socialist states are advocates of non-intervention in each other's internal affairs; they respect the laws and traditions of the fraternal countries, and consider it impermissible to utilize any means of economic, political, and military pressure in their mutual relations. They fight against any acts in inter-state relations designed to discredit or replace the composition of the party and the state organs which the people have entrusted with the administration of the country." (A.P. Butenko, ed., The World Socialist System and Anti-Communism, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1968, p. 148). Evidently, the publishers didn't get the word!!

In October, however, open polemics broke out with the publication of an article in Neues Deutschland which denounced the heresies and revisionism of the communist parties of Western Europe, especially the Austrian and Italian parties.¹⁹⁷ Simultaneously, the CPSU began to take actions against many Eurocommunist parties; actions including mail propaganda campaigns, embassy contacts with conservative party elements, and threats to withhold commissions earned by "front firms" and other forms of aid and assistance.¹⁹⁸ These tactics, however, were ineffective, and in announcing the postponement of the world party conference, the CPSU avoided any reference to the fact that disunity and discord in the Communist movement stemming from the Czech invasion had irrevocably forced the delay of this conclave of parties.¹⁹⁹

Given the massive toll that the Czechoslovak "solution" had taken within the international communist movement, it is not surprising that the international conference finally held in June 1969 was not a great success, although Moscow, of course, professed to be pleased with its results. The final document said little except for the general agreement that the assembled parties were opposed to imperialism and Maoism. In fact, this final document was the end result

¹⁹⁷ Neues Deutschland, 27 October 1968, (FBIS).

¹⁹⁸ Devlin, "New Crisis," p. 68.

¹⁹⁹ Wolfe, Soviet Power, p. 397n.

of four hundred amendments, one-quarter of which found their way into the final text. Not only did ten communist parties refuse to attend the conference, but five parties attended only to refuse to sign the final document. In addition, at least fifteen parties expressed clear and sharp dissent and the conference participants openly split into "autonomist" and "pro-Soviet" factions. Although the conference reaffirmed the "defense of socialism" as a communist duty, it explicitly rejected the concept of a "leading center of the international communist movement" and implicitly rejected the notion of a "general line" binding on all parties. Again, Soviet hopes for unity were dashed; the results of the conference were ambiguous at best.²⁰⁰

Due to the deep conflicts that the Czech intervention engendered and the obvious failure of the June 1969 conference to ameliorate them, the CPSU quickly turned to attempts to "normalize" its relations with the Eurocommunist and other parties. These attempts were marked primarily by pressures and factionalist intervention. Throughout 1969 and 1970, the CPSU continually pressed their "fraternal" parties to not only reconsider their opposition to and estrangement from the CPSU but also to purge their parties of the more active "anti-Soviet" elements. Roger Garaudy, himself thusly purged by the PCF, recounts in his book,

²⁰⁰Dallin, "The USSR," p. 221.

Toute la verite, that such pressures were applied, not only to the PCF, but also to the parties of Finland, Austria, Britain, Italy, Spain, and Greece. Devlin's research indicates that Sweden and Venezuela could also be included in this group.²⁰¹

In this effort, the greatest CPSU successes were to be found within the Austrian Communist Party. After a long and bitter struggle, the pro-Soviet faction managed to expell from the party both Ernst Fischer and Frank Marek (two very outspoken anti-Soviet party members) and to reverse the party's official stand on the invasion of Czechoslovakia — the only party in the entire world communist movement to have done so.²⁰²

Pressures against the PCI resulted in the expulsion of the Manifesto group in late 1969, and in Britain the Soviets were able to gradually but far from completely convince the BCP to soft-pedal the issues raised by CPSU actions in Czechoslovakia. CPSU pressures against the PCE were designed to bring that party back into line and the Soviets chose to back two pro-Soviet party members against Carrillo. These attempts, however, failed and both members, Eduardo Garcia and Augustin Gomez, were expelled from the party in early

²⁰¹Kevin Devlin, "Interparty Relations: Limits of Normalization," Problems of Communism (July-August 1971), p. 29.

²⁰²Ibid.

1970, as was the pro-Soviet exiled General Enrique Lister a few months later.²⁰³

Within the PCF, CPSU pressures certainly contributed to the ouster of Garaudy in 1970 and also the dismissal of the PCF party poet, Louis Aragon, who highly displeased the CPSU by asserting the Czechoslovak "normalization" was, in reality, "the Biafra of the human spirit."²⁰⁴ Although Garaudy's expulsion could be interpreted as a CPSU success, that judgement must be questioned to a great degree. Gradually the same party that had unanimously expelled him also has recently unanimously and officially accepted his policies, although he, himself, still remains outside of the party proper.²⁰⁵

Another interesting event took place during this period that, although occurring in South America, also sheds light upon the CPSU's growing opposition to the Eurocommunist phenomenon and ideology. Teodoro Petkoff, a Bulgarian emigrant, had surfaced within the Venezuelan Communist Party and, due to the Czech invasion, had become an ardent opponent of neo-Stalinism. His two books – Czechoslovakia: The Problem of Socialism and Socialism for Venezuela – aroused heated

²⁰³Ibid., p. 30.

²⁰⁴McInnes, Eurocommunism, p. 14.

²⁰⁵John E. McCarthy, "The Development of Eurocommunism: A Case Study of Italy and France," Master's Thesis, Monterey Institute of Foreign Studies, April 1977, p. 107.

debate within the PCV and also within the CPSU. A Soviet review of the latter book, published in 1970, accused Petkoff of "blackening the socialist countries, and above all the Soviet Union, in a tone of the most glaring anti-communism and anti-Sovietism," and added that his arguments on behalf of "pluralism of political parties in socialist countries, freedom of the press, the need for the Communist party to give up its leading and directing role in the state," etc., were based on a "superclass" approach "entirely alien to Marxism."²⁰⁶ The CPSU strongly urged the PCV to expell Petkoff and his followers, which they did in December 1970, but Petkoff promptly founded a rival political party. Before officially leaving the PCV, however, Petkoff summed up the progressives' demands for more independence and less dogmatism in the following words, words that could have easily come from the PCI, the PCE or even the PCF: "I am not working for an anti-Soviet, anti-Chinese or anti-Cuban party, but for an unaligned party. That is why I have sounded the alarm against the loss of independence... The Stalinists of the Communist Party ... want a party that contemplates its navel rather than one that looks at the country."²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶Voprosy filosofii (No. 10), 1970, cited in Devlin, "Interparty Relations," p. 31.

²⁰⁷El Nacional (Caracas), 4 December 1970, cited in Ibid.

The Soviet pressures continued throughout 1970 and 1971, increasing in intensity as the 24th CPSU Party Congress approached. Prior to the congress, many of the Eurocommunist parties conveyed their message to the CPSU that the congress should not, under any circumstances, attempt to rehabilitate Stalin or Stalinism. The Eurocommunist parties correctly realized that due to the crisis in Czechoslovakia, the problems in Poland, and the persistent internal political dissent, the CPSU had come to harbor an obsessive dread of "subversive" ideas, including those expounded by the Western European communist parties. Brezhnev's response to the Eurocommunist warnings was to forego "restalinization," but to insist upon "de-Khrushchevization." There would be tighter party control, but no reign of terror.

Brezhnev's opening remarks at the congress, although critical of right-wing and left-wing revisionism and nationalism, were relatively moderate. But when Masharov, the Belorussian party leader, rose to speak, the gloves came off. Masharov accused the right-wing revisionists of forming alliances with "openly anti-Communist and anti-Soviet elements," and of engaging in "pseudo-scientific discussions about a certain "rejuvenation" of Marxism, in a sorry effort to represent Leninism as a limited, local phenomenon, in talk about the so-called pluralism of Marxism, the plurality of

national models of socialism, and so forth."²⁰⁸ The PCI reacted immediately to Masherov's charges since they had no doubts as to Masherov's target. Neither had the Yugoslavs, who promptly commented:

"Masherov gave no names, but observers conclude that he meant not only the Italian Communist Party but also all other Western Communist parties which reject a blind and unconditional support of Soviet policy."²⁰⁹

Masherov's attack upon the Eurocommunists supported the positions taken by Soviet theorist S.M. Kovalev in a Pravda article released just prior to the congress in which he criticized unidentified Western communist parties for suggesting that "the parties in power in socialist countries should adapt their political practice" to the view that socialism is compatible with certain bourgeois political institutions, "particularly the right of activity for opposition parties." He summed up his article by asserting that "to give free play to all political forces in the socialist countries in the present atmosphere would mean the suicide of socialism."²¹⁰

In a strong sense, the CPSU had hoped that the 24th CPSU Party Congress would be a congress of "normalization." Unfortunately for the Soviets, the normalization that did

²⁰⁸Pravda, 1 April 1971, cited in Ibid.

²⁰⁹Devlin, "Interparty Relations," p. 35.

²¹⁰Znamia, February/March 1971, cited in Ibid.

occur fell far short of their aspirations. This fact, however, did not prevent the CPSU from portraying the congress in glowing terms:

"During the days of the Congress, Soviet Communists were able to convince themselves once more of the fact that the representatives of the fraternal parties warmly approve of the Leninist course of the CPSU and the principled line that it follows in the world Communist movement."²¹¹

Berlinguer and the PCI, however, apparently disagreed:

"At the Congress we were able to note again the existence of assessments different from ours on some important questions concerning the international workers' movement, relations between Communist parties, and the development of socialist thought. It is not only a question of the problems posed by the Czechoslovak events, regarding which our well-known positions remain unchanged, but also of more general questions such as, for example, the need to respect fully the independence of each party, each state, and each socialist state, which remains a fundamental issue for us."²¹²
(Emphasis added)

Throughout 1971 and into 1972, the Eurocommunist/CPSU polemics continued to grow but since the Soviet propaganda campaign was largely ineffective in controlling the actions of the Eurocommunist party, a curtain of censorship descended upon the Soviet-bloc nations designed to insulate that populace from the possibility of infection.²¹³

²¹¹Pravda, 13 April 1971, cited in Ibid., p. 25.

²¹²L'Unita, 2 April 1971, cited in Ibid., p. 25.

²¹³McInnes, Eurocommunism, pp. 55-56.

In early 1972, the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CPSU Central Committee released an article entitled "The Falsifiers of the Theory of Scientific Communism and Their Bankruptcy," in a further escalation of the Soviet attack upon the Eurocommunist heresy. Although one would have to read the article in its entirety to fully grasp the bitterness of its tone and the zeal of its arguments, perhaps a few excerpts will assist the reader in judging how far the opposition to the Eurocommunists had gone by early 1972. It is important to note that the following statements are not the words of some obscure writer in Pravda, but those of the Central Committee of the CPSU!

Gambling on disuniting the communist and entire revolutionary movement constitutes one of the main principles of imperialism's anti-communist strategy. Here the imperialists are placing special hopes on the subversive and splittist activities of revisionists ... In persistently speaking out against imperialism, the communist and workers parties are simultaneously waging an implacable ideological and political struggle against right and left opportunism in the contemporary revolutionary movement ...

... in many instances right and left opportunism are merging with nationalist tendencies and with the most reactionary and barefaced anti-communism and anti-Sovietism ... Therefore, dealing a rebuff to all forms of opportunism has been and remains a supremely important task for all Marxist-Leninist parties ...

... In the political sphere, revisionism has in fact attempted to revise the foundation of Marxism, the doctrine of the class struggle. Political freedom, democracy and universal suffrage destroys the soil for the class struggle ... Attacks on the dictatorship of the proletariat betray their intentions to

emasculate the revolutionary content of Marxism-Leninism, to render the working class leaderless and to remove its most aware and militant part ...

... The contemporary revisionist have reached the point of denying the historic mission of the working class and the necessity of socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat ... Their aim is to design a "model of socialism" which would, essentially, be a "hybrid society", unite the features of both socialism and capitalism. The revisionists conclude that the communists must perpetuate bourgeois democracy ...

... As historical experience testifies, under socialism grounds disappear for the existence of any kind of opposition parties which oppose the communist party ...

... The modern revisionists are particularly actively opposing the leading role of the communist parties in socialist countries ... events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 showed the grave consequences of abandoning Leninist principles ... The activity of the revisionists plunged that country into a profound crisis and jeopardized the socialist gains ...

... revisionists are striving ... to destroy the party itself, having corrupted it ideologically and organizationally ... The revisionists strive to present Leninist principles ... merely as a product of specifically Russian conditions ...

... It is primarily the modern revisionists who attack the principle of democratic centralism ... Behind this verbiage can be perceived a persistent aspiration to transform the party into a formless association ... Theoretical discussion is one thing, the political line of the party and the political struggle are another matter. We are not a discussion club ...

... The views of the revisionists represent a definite danger for the revolutionary forces because they are exploiting for reactionary purposes the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, ... passing themselves off as "rennovators" of

Marxism, ... and receiving the active support of the monopolistic bourgeoisie's propaganda machine ...

... The uncompromising struggle against the splitting activity of the revisionists and against their attempts to distort the theory of scientific communism is an important condition for achieving the ideological, political and organization unity of the communist and workers' parties. (Emphasis added)²¹⁴

Over the next several years, the exchange of polemics between the Eurocommunist parties and the Soviet-bloc parties continued to grow, both in frequency and bitterness. In general, the disputes centered around the varying interpretations of traditional communist dogma, civil liberties, dissent, parliamentary institutions, defense policy and NATO, European integration, political alliances, inter-party relations, party autonomy, internationalism, militancy, and the negotiations which preceded the pan-European conference in East Berlin.²¹⁵ The events and conflicts leading up to the 25th CPSU Party Congress in February 1976 and the pan-European conference in June of that same year have already been adequately reported in Section VI. It might be well, however, to look at some other developments during that period so as to shed further light on the widening distance between the Eurocommunists and the CPSU.

²¹⁴Kommunist, 22 February 1972, pp. 101-105.

²¹⁵For an excellent, in-depth discussion of these and other important issues, see McInnes, Eurocommunism.

By 1975, not only due to Eurocommunist intransigence during the pre-conference negotiations but also due to other Eurocommunist policy decisions, programs, and pronouncements, the activities of these "revisionist" parties were becoming nearly intolerable and the Soviet-bloc began to respond with even stronger criticism. The propaganda offensive appears to have opened in April 1975 at about the same time as the first East German draft was being offered to the Eurocommunist parties in preparation for the East Berlin conference. An article in The World Marxist Review, written by its editor, Konstantin Zaradov, accused the Eurocommunists of abandoning the revolutionary struggle and severely attacked their tactic of using the electoral means to come to power. Appearing as it did, just prior to the elections in Portugal, Zaradov seems to have been calling, too, for a more militant stand on the part of the Eurocommunist parties, in particular the Portuguese, and for a more "activist" Soviet role in the promotion of Communist revolutions. He stated that these policies could now be pursued because of the strength of the "socialist world system." In other words, the military power of the Warsaw Pact would deter any attempt by the West to intervene should Western European Communist Parties adopt a more militant stand.²¹⁶ The Zaradov article brought a strong rebuttal from the PCI, the PCE, and the PCF.

²¹⁶ Stephen F. Larabee, "New Light on the Zaradov Controversy," Radio Liberty Research Report, RL 413/75 (29 September 1975), pp. 1-4.

In June, Ladislav Novotny, the Czechoslovak ideologist, attacked the PCI's "historic compromise" with the Christian Democrats as revisionist, opportunist, and "destructive of the revolutionary movement."²¹⁷ Two months later, Zaradov again attacked the Eurocommunists, this time in Pravda, and called for the "hegemony of the proletariat" and reasserted the validity of the Leninist party model in support of the Portuguese CP's struggle for power. Additionally, Zaradov condemned the alliances of the PCI and the PCF as impure and warned that such opportunism would lead them into an ideologically amorphous bloc, which was purely "Menshevik logic."²¹⁸ Zaradov continued his critique in the August edition of The World Marxist Review stating that "we find the opportunists suggesting various recipes for diluting the communist parties in ideologically amorphous coalitions, election blocs and alliances, without any conditions whatever. All such proposals are motivated, we are told, by concern for unity. But the real purpose is to dull the anti-monopoly orientation of democratic alliances and weaken their most militant element, the communists."²¹⁹

Brezhnev, who up to this point had maintained a relatively low profile in the exchange of polemics, suddenly

²¹⁷McInnes, Eurocommunism, pp. 40-41.

²¹⁸Pravda, 6 August 1975, (FBIS).

²¹⁹World Marxist Review, August 1975, pp. 34-35.

elected to meet publicly with Zaradov; an event that received front-page coverage in Pravda. Although many explanations have been offered for this unusual meeting, the most plausible one is that Brezhnev met with Zaradov for internal political reasons. As Thomas Hammond has pointed out, there have been and remain serious differences of opinion among the CPSU elite as to the policy to follow regarding the Eurocommunist parties; a dispute between "cautious gradualism" and "ideological fervor and militancy."²²⁰ Brezhnev, in September 1975, probably felt the need to buttress his support from the more conservative members of the leadership and saw the meeting with Zaradov as one way of doing this. This interpretation gains further credibility when one considers the events occurring simultaneously in the pan-European conference negotiations. The East Germans had submitted a third draft document, written between July and September, and it appeared that it was much more acceptable to the Eurocommunist parties. When the Editorial Commission met in November to discuss this draft, however, the Soviet position had changed again and Katushev, the CPSU delegate, again put forward the Soviet demands for a more "ideologically pure" final document. It seems likely that Brezhnev wished to wait until after his leadership position was reconfirmed

²²⁰Thomas T. Hammond, "Moscow and Communist Takeovers," Problems in Communism (January-February 1976), p. 65.

at the 25th CPSU Party Congress before he would sanction any further watering-down of the Soviet demands. Additionally, he was certain to have believed that this move would strengthen his position in "conservative" party circles and that the CPSU party congress would serve as an additional stimulus to pry concessions from the Western CP's.²²¹

Late 1975 also saw continued polemics in the Soviet press. Vadim Zagladin, from the CPSU's Central Committee, denounced the electoral preoccupations of the Eurocommunists claiming they would lead them into association with social democrats, thus risking the loss of their revolutionary nature. He strongly asserted that "Marxist-Leninists consider it inadmissible to cultivate compromises which could involve the loss of revolutionary identity in order to gain an ally or a thousand votes ... a costly price will later have to be paid."²²² In December, Zagladin was sent to negotiate with the PCI, but this mission apparently failed to alter the PCI's position.

²²¹A New York Times article later asserted that "non-Communist experts now speculate that the switch in the Russian position might not have been a real change in Mr. Brezhnev's line, but was just a decision by the Soviet leader that the concessions demanded were too much to accept shortly before the Russian Congress and therefore represented a deferral of their acceptance." (New York Times, 24 June 1976, p. 12C)

²²²Kommunist, November 1975, (FBIS).

In February 1976, the CPSU dispatched Kirilenko to the PCF's party congress in the hopes of convincing Marchais to attend the forthcoming Soviet conference and of softening the PCF's stand on the pan-European conference document. Kirilenko was not only denied the floor at the congress but had to be content with speaking at a meeting in a Paris suburb at which he declared that "all the fuss about the rights of man in socialist society" was merely anti-Sovietism.²²³ The same day Rude Pravo ran an editorial which, without mentioning the PCF, denounced the rejection of the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat as "righist revisionism" stating that those who disavowed the doctrine could not be called socialists.²²⁴ A similar but more virulent attack against the Western European communist parties appeared in the CZCP theoretical journal Nova Mysl, published in Prague, at roughly the same time as the Kirilenko visit to France. Several excerpts should demonstrate the direction the "pro-Soviet" polemics were taking just prior to the 25th CPSU congress:

"The theory of national communism and specific models of communism is one of the weapons used by imperialism to fight the revolutionary movement ... Nationalism and particularism undermine the unity of the progressive forces and above all the unity of the international working class and the communist parties ... other weapons of imperialism are speculation

²²³McInnes, Eurocommunism, p. 16.

²²⁴Rude Pravo, 6 February 1976, (FBIS).

on limited or unlimited sovereignty, Maoist great-power chauvinism, the multiple versions of anti-Sovietism, and reservations about the validity of the principle of proletarian internationalism...

...Specific national characteristics, national traditions and interests are interpreted in such a way as to place them in clear conflict with the interests and intentions of the progressive forces...

...Nationalism...and chauvinism are the common denominator of a vast range of ideological and political trends which today play an objective role in favor of international reaction and anticommunism, weakening the international revolutionary movement and the anti-imperialist front."²²⁵

The activities at the 25th CPSU Party Congress were discussed extensively in Section VI, but several additional events should be brought out at this point. First, Brezhnev's remarks to the assembled delegates were unprecedented in their sharpness of the implied criticism of the Eurocommunist parties. He accused them of ignoring "proletarian internationalism," harming the communist movement through "opportunism" and of playing into the hands of the "class enemy."²²⁶ When Masharov took the platform, his attacks were more direct. He charged the Western parties of "rightwing opportunism," attempting to "modernize Marxism...and to cut it up into

²²⁵As quoted by ANSA (Rome), 31 January 1976 (FBIS Daily Rpt., E. Eur., 3 February 1976, p. D-3).

²²⁶Triska, "Diversity," p. 18.

national slices."²²⁷ Finally, when Berlinguer attempted to speak, the Soviets strongly insisted that he make over fifty revisions to his speech. Only Berlinguer's threat to walk out, thus joining Marchais and Carrillo, forced the Soviets to back down and to allow Berlinguer's speech to be presented unchanged.

Immediately after the congress, the CZCP official, Josef Kempny, denounced the "transformation of Marxist-Leninist parties into opportunistic parties of a Social Democratic type."²²⁸ Mikhail Suslov, the Politburo member in charge of the international communist movement, shortly thereafter echoed both Brezhnev's and Kempny's criticism and added the point that "regional or national" versions of Marxism harm the cause of the working class. He then branded as "enemies of Marxism" those who interpret communist ideology in their own fashion: "They slander real socialism, try to wash out the revolutionary essence of Marxist-Leninist teaching, and substitute bourgeois liberalism for Marxism."²²⁹

In April, KGB Chief Yu. V. Andropov, until this point relatively silent on this issue, joined the "anti-revisionist" bandwagon. In a speech commemorating Lenin's 106th birthday Andropov insisted that the CPSU "regards

²²⁷Pravda, 25 February 1976, (FBIS).

²²⁸Nova Svoboda (Ostrava), 15 March 1976, (FBIS).

²²⁹Pravda, 18 March 1976, (FBIS).

fidelity to Leninism as an immutable law" and the distorting of the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat has "a single goal -- representing [it] as the antithesis of democracy." Andropov further asserted that "the Party assigns over-riding importance to the interests of the Soviet people and the interest of communist construction. That which is at variance with these interests we reject," he quoted Brezhnev, "and no one can persuade us that this course is the wrong approach."²³⁰ Further such attacks were common in most Soviet-bloc press organs during the period leading up to the pan-European conference in East Berlin.

The activities surrounding and the events occurring at the pan-European conference of Communist parties have already received much attention, including Brezhnev's low-key, yet insistent support of the continued "validity" of "proletarian internationalism." It is, however, also interesting to note that at the conference itself the Soviet delegates continued to demand that the text of the final document include a very restrictive definition of the "permissible" types of alliances

²³⁰ Izvestia, 23 April 1976, (FBIS). Ponomarev echoed Andropov's sentiments in his article for the World Marxist Review (May, 1976). Ponomarev claimed the 25th CPSU Congress was pervaded with the militant spirit of proletarian internationalism, asserted Marxism-Leninism was the only valid theory, and accused the right-wing revisionists of distorting and undermining the entire movement and of attacking the Soviet political system. These comments were quite obviously aimed at the Eurcommunists, not the Chinese.

a communist party could contact and that the joint declaration of all the parties serve as the platform for any such agreement with non-communist forces.²³¹ These demands were rejected by the Eurocommunist parties and their allies and there appears to be little doubt that the East Berlin conference had dealt a massive blow to Soviet prestige and the legitimacy of the CPSU and the regimes in Eastern Europe. In this regard, one of the best assessments of the East Berlin conference was made by The Economist:

Anybody who had seen what actually happened at last week's conference of European communists in East Berlin, and then read Pravda's version, may have wondered whether the Soviet newspaper's men had attended quite a different meeting by mistake ...

... clearly, the Soviet leadership is terrified of its own subjects' reactions to the change. It could not silence, or even denounce, the heresies that were uttered in Berlin, Yet it could not admit to the peoples of the Soviet Union that they had been uttered. The sands are likely to run out on Mr. Brezhnev before he can get anywhere near resolving this contradiction.²³²

In addition to placing rigid censorship upon the "revisionist" attitudes expressed at the conference, the CPSU lost no time in launching again its critiques of the "Eurocommunist path to socialism." Immediately after the conference, Zagladin stated that "the independence and

²³¹McInnes, Eurocommunism, p. 42.

²³²The Economist, 10 July 1976, p. 50.

self-dependence of the fraternal parties is a precondition for the development of equal cooperation among them... But one must not forget for a moment the natural laws and truths of universal significance by which every party must be guided in order to fulfill successfully its historic mission ... one of these natural laws of universal significance is proletarian internationalism." (Emphasis added)²³³ A July article in Pravda was even more explicit in its assault on the policies of the Eurocommunist parties:

"... experience refutes the fantasies of bourgeois theoreticians and revisionists who allege that the principle of proletarian, socialist internationalism presupposes renunciation of the independence of individual detachments in favor of a single center ...

... Bourgeois ideologists today prefer to criticize socialism, setting up against it not the capitalist systems but so-called "democratic socialism" which is a distorted form of the new society or a camouflaged form of the old ... At present, bourgeois ideologists and the reformists and revisionists affiliated with them are placing special emphasis on the diversity of paths to socialism ... There is, however, a certain limit to the interpretation of diversity. Those who, under the banner of diversity and national features, emasculate the main content of socialist principles cannot see or do not wish to see this limit."²³⁴

One of the more vitriolic attacks against the "heresies" of the Eurocommunist parties was made by Masherov in a speech

²³³Pravda, 30 June 1976, (FBIS).

²³⁴Pravda, 23 July 1976, (FBIS).

in Minsk. The general tone of Masherov's remarks was a far cry from the "gentle urgings" for ideological compliance which came from the Kremlin in the late 1960's:

"Our Party preserves an invincible loyalty to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, uncompromisingly defending this great revolutionary teaching against reformists and revisionist distortions ...In the pseudo-scientific research of bourgeois ideologists and all manner of falsifiers of Marxism-Leninism, it has become fashionable to declare as dogmatism and as obsolete everything that...indicates steadfast, undeviating adherence in theory, policy, and practice to the fundamental principles and tenets of the Marxist-Leninist science of victory...

...With the aid of a revisionist ideology marching under the banner of "creative development" and "renovation" of Marxism-Leninism, our enemies pursue a far-reaching goal: to emasculate and drown in the swamp of opportunism the essence of Marxist-Leninist teaching and to disarm ideologically the revolutionary forces of today."²³⁵ (Emphasis added)

By mid-Fall 1976, any serious reading of the Soviet-bloc press made it readily apparent that the Eastern European regimes had actively joined with the CPSU in their attacks upon the "revisionists" and "falsifiers" in Western Europe. In November, Rude Pravo characterized the PCI's criticism of Czech oppression of priests as "anti-Czechoslovak slander... unprecedented in the history of the communist press" and inferred that the Czech government would get better treatment from many "bourgeois journals."²³⁶ A short time later,

²³⁵Pravda, 2 October 1976, (FBIS).

²³⁶Rude Pravo, 23 November 1976, (FBIS).

Todor Zhivkov and his BCP joined the campaign with Zhivkov's assertion that Bulgaria "sacredly keeps the purity of Marxism-Leninism, its loyalty to internationalism" and his criticism of the Eurocommunists' non-compliance with the "law-governed regularities of the revolutionary process of socialism."²³⁷

In mid-December, the "loyalist" regimes held an ideological conference in Sofia to work out their "political line." At this conference, the Bulgarian delegate, Aleksandur Lilov, characterized Eurocommunism as "tearing apart the inseparable dialectical unity of the common, spearate and individual features of social progress" and stated that "the classical tenet of Marx and Engels on proletarian internationalism remains the greatest idea of proletarian revolutionary strategy; an attitude that finds its expression in the support of the CPSU and the USSR."²³⁸ Konstantin Zaradov was also in attendance and publicly added his condemnation of the Western "revisionists" for their attitude of acceptance toward the "multiparty pluralistic system" and their alliances with "leftist democratic forces. Zaradov ended his speech by pointing out the "necessity of conducting a struggle against our ideological opponents, who will undoubtedly attempt to diminish the importance of the contemporary significance of

²³⁷Rabotnichesko delo, 1 December 1976, (FBIS).

²³⁸Rabotnichesko delo, 16 December 1976, (FBIS).

the lessons of the Great October Revolution..."²³⁹ Meanwhile, Rude Pravo was proclaiming that "a really Marxist party, defending the interests of the working class, can never renounce proletarian internationalism" since it would deprive "the communist parties...of a strong and well-proved weapon."²⁴⁰ A Yugoslav commentary accurately portrayed the growing debate in its statements of 17 December 1976:

"...the principles of independence and the right of every party to independently determine the directions of its internal and foreign policy are becoming increasingly manifest...

...The Berlin Conference of European Communist and Workers Parties significantly encouraged the discussions [which] include sharp polemics on Stalinism, national paths to socialism, Eurocommunism, the socialist community and other terms... The national paths to socialism and the insistence on independence and equality of parties is now described as anticommunism and anti-Sovietism. What is pitted against the different paths to socialism is...the so-called "real socialism" — that is, the path of the Soviet Union...

...The Bulgarian Communist Party and the Czechoslovak Communist Party have taken on the task of exposing Eurocommunism and everything that is understood by this term as "revisionism..."

...West European communist parties, however — and above all the communist parties of Italy and France — do not agree with such assessments..."²⁴¹

²³⁹Rabotnichesko delo, 17 December 1976, (FBIS).

²⁴⁰Rude Pravo, 10 December 1976, (FBIS).

²⁴¹SUNDIC Commentary (Zagreb), 17 December 1976 (FBIS Daily Rpt., E. Eur., 20 December 1976, p. I-12).

The final important attack against the Western European communist parties in 1976 was delivered by Todor Zhivkov in his article in Problemy Mira I Sotsializma in which he stated that Eurocommunism "represents a new kind of anti-communism." The BCP party organ, Rabotnichesko Delo, further elaborated Zhivkov's position by proclaiming "the struggle against anti-Sovietism is an order of the epoch," and identified anti-communism with anti-Marxism and connected it with "nationalist suggestions." The BCP organ demanded that all attempts at defending "national and other models of socialism" should be "unmasked as anti-Marxist and anti-scientific," since their purpose was to "deny real socialism in the USSR, and thus also the principles of scientific communism." The Soviet periodical, Novaya I Noveyshaya Istoriya backed up the Zhivkov pronouncements and stated that "revisionists operating under the banner of national communism" as well as "right-wing opportunists" were trying to pit numerous "national models" against "really existing socialism." The Soviet article further accused the "revisionists and opportunists" of "confronting national peculiarities with general laws" and of "helping the dissemination of a nationalist ideology in the proletarian circle."²⁴² Asked if he agreed with Todor Zhivkov's assessment of Eurocommunism, Vadim Zagladin of the CPSU's Central

²⁴²As quoted by Belgrade NIN, 26 December 1976, (FBIS).

Committee responded by stating that the term "Eurocommunism" was invented by Zbigniew Brzezinski and could be understood in different ways. Zagladin did, however, support Zhivkov's denunciation of a "Eurocommunism" that would break the "unitary front of the international movement with an anti-Soviet aim."²⁴³

The year 1977 introduced two additional factors into the interparty debates within the world communist movement. Not only did Charter 77 and other associated dissident activities apparently catch the Soviet-bloc regimes unprepared, but also the sudden emergence of the President of the United States as a human rights activist jolted the CPSU and her Eastern European allies. The impact of these two new phenomena, combined with the continued Eurocommunist activities, appears to have momentarily shaken the confidence of the "hard-liners," introduced a great deal of uncertainty as to the proper response, and revealed some rather large "splits" within the Soviet-bloc itself. The CPSU announced that it would conduct "more heated and open polemics with all those interpreting in an incorrect and ill-intentioned manner the substantive questions of strategy and tactics in the struggle for socialism." These public "polemics" were to be directed not only at the "enemy ideology," but also at the "different anti-Marxist currents" and "fellow minds or people having

²⁴³L'Espresso, 26 December 1976, (FBIS).

close positions."²⁴⁴ This revelation was definitely a dramatic change in Soviet policy. The need for "public debates" had been denied for years since the CPSU believed that it could do more harm than good and that no evidence of "discord" within the communist community should ever be revealed "in face of the class enemy."²⁴⁵ A Zagladin article on proletarian internationalism shortly following this announcement seemed to indicate a more conciliatory attitude toward the revisionism of the Eurocommunist parties.²⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the Czechoslovaks, Bulgarians, and East Germans continued their strong attacks against "right-wing revisionism" and carried out hard-line policies against dissident activities.

In Hungary, however, a different approach could be observed. Janos Kadar had previously openly disagreed with Zhivkov's assessment of Eurocommunism as but a new form of anti-communism. In January, the periodical Tarsadalmi Szemle even advanced the notion that socialism could be achieved under the conditions of a multiparty system.²⁴⁷ According to a Yugoslav source, the Hungarians did not feel their participation in the polemics was necessary and, therefore,

²⁴⁴Kommunist, January 1977, (FBIS).

²⁴⁵TANJUG (Belgrade), 4 January 1977 (FBIS Daily Rpt., E. Eur., 5 January 1977, p. I-6).

²⁴⁶Rabochiy Klass I Sovremennyy Mir, 12 January 1977, (FBIS).

²⁴⁷TANJUG (Belgrade), 12 January 1977 (FBIS Daily Rpt., E. Eur., 13 January 1977, pp. I-17,18).

were not showing much enthusiasm for them. The Kadar regime was obviously taking a more flexible and understanding view of the Eurocommunist parties and was asserting that the Western parties were the "most competent" to choose their methods and styles.²⁴⁸

Even in Poland a less than purist line was being followed. Trybuna Ludu was pointing out that even Lenin indicated that the movement "could not take the same course in various countries," and maintaining that "the communist parties are right in believing that each party should preserve its self-dependence and individually work out the political line in keeping with its own country's socioeconomic situation and national characteristics."²⁴⁹

While the Soviets continued to paint Eurocommunism as simply a creation of the "bourgeois press" in an attempt to "distort the tactics and strategy of the communist movement," the Czechoslovak regime found it to be something quite different:

"Its theories are dangerous in that they create an illusion about bourgeois democracy and distort and falsify the substance of socialist democracy...Petty bourgeois ideology is penetrating also into the ranks of the workers movement, and for this reason it disguises itself with Marxist terminology, which is very dangerous...Revisionism stands on the platform of the so-called third path of politics...it

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Trybuna Ludu, 17 January 1977, (FBIS).

is ideologically and politically dangerous...
under the mask of objectivity and equality,
it makes antisocialist and counter-
revolutionary activity possible."²⁵⁰

After one month of relatively moderate activity, the CPSU again took up the attack against the Western communist parties and the supporters of the dissidents within the Soviet bloc. At the end of a bloc-wide conference in Budapest during late January, in which the Bulgarians warned against the "infiltration of nationalist elements using Eurocommunism as a disguise,"²⁵¹ the CPSU Central Committee issued a resolution that reversed the apparent toleration of diversity inside communism. Once again, proletarian internationalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat were to be communism's basic doctrines everywhere. Evidently, the Central Committee, the core of CPSU officialdom, had determined that criticism had gone too far and that without a vigorous counterattack, the very structure of the Soviet state and its goodwill among the revolutionary-inclined third-world peoples, not to mention the "loyalist" regimes within the Warsaw Pact, would be seriously eroded.²⁵² This decision could also be seen as a rejection of the strategies advanced by the CPSU's International Department (Ponomarev and Zagladin), and possibly those of Leonid Brezhnev himself,

²⁵⁰Rude Pravo, 20 January 1977, (FBIS).

²⁵¹Christian Science Monitor, 2 February 1977, p. 10.

²⁵²Ibid.

who, at least publicly, had been pursuing a fairly moderate course.

As the Czechoslovak press increased its attitude of intolerance toward the Eurocommunist parties, the Soviet press did likewise. Numerous Soviet publications now asserted that Western European communist parties were being taken in by revisionists and anti-Soviet propaganda which they themselves encouraged. Eurocommunist assessments of the defects of the Soviet model, especially regarding its insufficient democracy, were portrayed as particularly unacceptable and detrimental. One Soviet journal, Novoye Vremya, even accused the Eurocommunists of "slandering the democracy of the Soviet Union and its internal and foreign policies."²⁵³

A particularly strong attack was noted in the Bratislava Pravda which escalated the intensity of the accusations:

"Certain Western ideologists are now designing new variants of "Marxism" so as to split nations... Often refusing to regard Marxism as the basis of a cohesive world outlook, they apply the bourgeois concepts of pluralism which splits Marxism into mutually independent "national variants"... They negate the international nature of the proletarian doctrine and the unity of...the revolutionary movement. [Doing this is] like dividing mathematics into German, French, Russian and American mathematics."²⁵⁴

²⁵³TANJUG (Belgrade), 7 February 1977 (FBIS Daily Rpt., E. Eur., 7 February 1977, p. I-7).

²⁵⁴Pravda (Bratislava), 9 February 1977, (FBIS).

Reacting to the Charter 77 dissidents and, for the first time, the protests in Poland, the CPSU accused the West of distracting attention from its own weaknesses, discrediting socialism, heating up the climate before the Belgrade conference, and dividing and discrediting the Western communist parties.²⁵⁵ It was further implied that the Western communist parties were playing into the hands of the campaign concerning democratic and human freedoms in the socialist countries and the CPSU made it very clear that "all critics of Soviet achievement...who in spite of the truth call our evident successes into question will not be allowed to interfere in our internal affairs."²⁵⁶

By the end of February, in spite of the increased polemics, there was still no "unitary" attack against the West or the Eurocommunist parties. Moscow itself was still hitting out in all directions — at its own dissidents and those in Prague and the Western European communists and Yugoslav "revisionists" who supported them. Czechoslovakia was the most vocal and had to be told to "play it cool" and leave the main issue to Moscow. Bulgaria was strongly in the "Soviet camp," but Hungary was still discreetly "neutral" in its attitude toward Eurocommunism.²⁵⁷ When the PCI sent

²⁵⁵Christian Science Monitor, 12 February 1977, pp. 1,6.

²⁵⁶Pravda, 12 February 1977, (FBIS).

²⁵⁷New York Times, 25 February 1977, p. 3A.

a delegation to Moscow in late February to discuss the issue of political dissent in Eastern Europe, they found the Soviets "reluctant" to accept their recommendations. The PCI delegation noted that "Moscow was aware of the overriding importance of detente, but if more leeway for the dissidents was the price of detente, Moscow will think hard whether it's worth paying." The CPSU officials reportedly told the PCI delegation that they had no right to intervene on behalf of the critics in Eastern Europe and stated flatly that "if you want to be autonomous, then you must respect the autonomy of the Czechoslovak comrades and, for that matter, of the Soviet party to deal with the dissidence as they see fit."²⁵⁸ In his assessment of the Eurocommunist/Soviet debate as of February 1977, Jiri Pelikan, the prominent former Czechoslovak party official, observed the following:

"The recent document of the CPSU Central Committee in preparation for the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution...confirms that for the Soviets the Berlin conference was a temporary compromise with Eurocommunism and that they are continuing to insist, on principle, on their monopoly of the leadership role, as a big power, and of the hegemony of their party with respect to the other communist parties...what matters to it is hegemony, as a state, over the East bloc countries and over the Eurocommunist parties...

...The conflict among the parties will intensify. We are at the beginning of a process at whose

²⁵⁸Ibid.

conclusion there will be another split in the communist movement, because these two conceptions cannot coexist for very long."²⁵⁹

That such a split was looming ever more largely on the international horizon should have been accentuated by the events during the first week of March. While the PCI, PCF, and PCE leaders were meeting together in Madrid, representatives of the Central Committees of Bulgaria, East Germany, Cuba, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the USSR were meeting simultaneously in Sofia, Bulgaria.²⁶⁰ Held under the guise of "preparing for the 60th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution," the actual purpose of the Sofia conference was to draft and adopt a coordinated offensive against both the Western human and civil rights accusations and the "revisionism" of the Eurocommunist parties, in addition to preparing a common position for the forthcoming Belgrade conference that is to review the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act. This meeting was necessary, according to Nepszabadsag, since "a campaign of

²⁵⁹ El Pais (Madrid), (Pelkan Interview) 26 February 1977, (FBIS).

²⁶⁰ The major European delegates at the Sofia conference were as follows: USSR - Ponomarev, Katushev, Zymyanin; Bulgaria - Lilov, Filipov; East Germany - Hager, Axen, Lamberz; Poland - Frelek, Luaszewicz; Romania - Burtica; Hungary - Ovari, Gyenes, Gyori; and Czechoslovakia - Havlin, Bilak. (One might note at this point that not only can Eurocommunism weaken the links between the Eastern European regimes, but it can also drive them together in an effort to maintain their legitimacy and internal order; two strangely conflicting and contradictory effects of the Eurocommunist phenomenon.)

incitement, not experienced for a long time, has been launched in the capitalist countries. A wide-ranging anti-communist and anti-Soviet maneuver has been started with the aim of poisoning the international atmosphere and driving a wedge between the European communist parties."²⁶¹ At the conference, the Soviets revealed to the delegates what they had privately told the Czechoslovak party two weeks earlier -- that the clash with the Eurocommunists was inevitable, but at the present time, due to the dissidence and economic problems in the Soviet-bloc, nothing should be done to hasten its onset. The Soviets, thus, insisted on a more prudent policy that would avoid, among other things, any open confrontation that would seriously complicate East-West relations.²⁶² When the conference closed, its decisions were hailed as confirming the "maturity, unity, and close cooperation of the fraternal parties; it confirmed the unity of thought and action of 25 million communists."²⁶³

The new propaganda drive started in mid-March with none other than Rude Pravo which now asserted that "dissidents in the socialist countries" were supported by the American CIA, the same CIA which holds that "part of its dirty act is to procure female companions for Western officials visiting

²⁶¹Nepszabadsag (Budapest), 6 March 1977, (FBIS).

²⁶²L'Espresso, 27 March 1977; see also Christian Science Monitor, 4 March 1977, p. 4.

²⁶³Rabotnichesko delo, 6 March 1977, (FBIS).

Washington."²⁶⁴ A La Vanguardia interview with the Soviet editor of Literaturnaya Gazeta, Vitaliy Syrokomskiy, revealed the following comments:

The U.S. press says Eurocommunism is the means of weakening the Soviet Union's position in its international relations; it is the means of destroying the unity of the socialist countries ... and the international communist movement. If this is really so, then, as is natural, we are opposed to Eurocommunism...

The Soviet Union supports all communist parties in the world. On the other hand, I will tell you that now, since communism is so fashionable, some parties are taking the name although they are not really communist. This applies to the parties which do not follow ... the principles recognized by all the communist parties in the world ... the great ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin [are] the strict guarantees of each party's sovereign independence. (Emphasis Added)²⁶⁵

The Soviet publication Novoye Vremya then added that the Eurocommunist parties were not "acting in accordance with the conclusions of the Berlin conference," were "weakening international solidarity," and were viewing internationalism through the prism of "accelerated attainment of national goals." This, according to Novoye Vremya, is a "great and unforgivable sin."²⁶⁶

By the end of March, Western propaganda analysts began to notice that the polemics originating in Prague, Sofia,

²⁶⁴Rude Pravo, 15 March 1977, (FBIS).

²⁶⁵La Vanguardia (Barcelona), 16 March 1977, (FBIS).

²⁶⁶TANJUG (Belgrade), 12 March 1977 (FBIS Daily Rpt., E. Eur., 14 Mrch 1977, pp. I-7, 8.

East Berlin and Moscow appeared curiously dated; "like Karl Marx and Frederick Engels thundering about conditions in England more than 100 years ago," commented one analyst in Vienna. It was also apparent to these analysts that, although the Czechs, East Germans and Bulgarians were particularly strident, the Poles and Romanians were less so and the Hungarians were almost silent;²⁶⁷ in fact, the Kadar regime had actually praised President Carter's speech at the United Nations.²⁶⁸

Obviously, the "unity of thought and action of 25 million communists" expressed at the Sofia conference was short-lived. It would appear that some of the Eastern European regimes wished to have no direct involvement with the US/USSR confrontation over human rights. "When the atmosphere cools between Moscow and Washington," remarked one Eastern European official in the Christian Science Monitor, "we are the first to feel the chill. There is reason to believe that many Eastern Europeans feared that too much rhetoric could cause the Soviets to seek a general tightening up within the bloc."²⁶⁹

Given the CPSU's pronouncement at Sofia that now was not the time for the inevitable clash with the Eurocommunists and that "prudent policies" should be pursued, the Kremlin was no doubt surprised by Vasil Bilak's comments to the

²⁶⁷ New York Times, 14 April 1977, p. 4A.

²⁶⁸ Christian Science Monitor, 23 March 1977, p. 9.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

Czechoslovak Central Committee. As reported in the West, Bilak called the Eurocommunists "traitors" and specifically attacked the PCF for forming an alliance with "one of the biggest anti-communists in existence — F. Mitterand."

Bilak additionally castigated the PCE and expressed his harsh criticism of the Eurocommunist meeting in Madrid, calling it "an unprincipled and treacherous policy."²⁷⁰

Then again, perhaps the CPSU was not surprised at all, especially considering that Bilak is one of the most orthodox Czechoslovak leaders who had previously asked the Soviet Union for "fraternal assistance" in 1968.²⁷¹

Throughout April, the Czechoslovaks continued their polemics and began to harrass Western correspondents who attempted to talk with dissidents, in some cases actually denying visas to reporters who would not pledge to avoid such contacts. The Hungarians continued to maintain their reticence and the Poles, too, pressed forward with relatively moderate policies and actions. On April 22, the CPSU held its annual gathering to celebrate the anniversary of Lenin's birth and the 60th anniversary of Lenin's seizure of power. The traditional speech was delivered by Mikhail Zimyanin, former Pravda editor, and now a member of the Central Committee. "The teaching and cause of Lenin are immortal," declared

²⁷⁰ Le Monde, 1 April 1977, (FBIS).

²⁷¹ Ibid.

Zimyanin, and those who move away from it "betray the socialist revolution." The speaker went on to proclaim that Lenin's principle of "proletarian internationalism" was an "eternal theory" and added that the attitude towards Lenin and Leninism had become the "touchstone of a true revolutionary spirit." "There is no internal opposition in the Soviet Union – only isolated renegades, agents of foreign propaganda, and espionage centers," Zimyanin told his audience; a claim that was highly reminiscent of Stalin's days in the Kremlin.²⁷² A few days after this celebration, the CPSU protested to the United States about the activities of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, claiming their broadcasts amounted to "ideological sabotage." The Soviet warning also threatened "consequences" if the "provocations" were not halted.²⁷³

The final blast leveled at the Eurocommunist parties, as of the writing of this report, was the product of the annual meeting of the communist parties in Prague, held under the auspices of the World Marxist Review. These meetings have become a sounding board for international communist theory and have turned into something akin to a contemporary Comintern. This meeting, prepared under the guidance of Mikhail Suslov, once again loudly insisted on

²⁷²Christian Science Monitor, 25 April 1977, p. 42.

²⁷³Monterey Peninsula Herald, 5 May 1977, p. 39.

the universal validity of the Kremlin's system of communism. Boris Ponomarev, Suslov's deputy, told the assembled communist party representatives that Eurocommunism and its defense of human rights was "a deceptive slogan fabricated by imperialism to undermine the prestige of the communists and their parties in capitalist countries." Ponomarev strongly censured those parties who emphasized the Russian character of the Soviet revolution and went on to demand unconditional acceptance of Soviet policy by all loyal communists. These pronouncements would tend to indicate that now even the CPSU's International Department is prepared to foresake the moderate line in favor of a policy that reasserts the CPSU's primacy and leadership within the world communist movement.²⁷⁴

What should be undeniably obvious from this rather lengthy discussion of the reactions and responses of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is that to this point, no effective answer to the Eurocommunist challenge has been found. What had begun as "comradely advice" in the 1950's turned to bitter debate and overt demands in the 1970's. The CPSU has attempted to coax unity, organize unity, and force unity upon the Eurocommunist parties but has had little success and in many cases has only driven the Eurocommunists further away from Soviet influence and control. No policy

²⁷⁴ Christian Science Monitor, 13 May 1977, pp. 1, 6.

yet pursued has managed to further Soviet aims with the Eurocommunists while simultaneously limiting the negative impacts of Eurocommunism upon Soviet power, prestige, and legitimacy. To make matters worse, there appears to be little consensus within Eastern Europe on how to deal with this Eurocommunist phenomenon. Czechoslovakia is by far the most outspoken in advocating strong opposition to the "traitors" in Western Europe and Bulgaria tends to support the Czechoslovak attitudes. East Germany is relatively silent on the issue, although it fully supports the CPSU's position. The Poles have been remarkably flexible; sometimes supporting the Eurocommunist positions and sometimes rejecting them — they obviously see some merit in what the PCI, the PCF, and the PCE are espousing. The Hungarian party, under Kadar's leadership, has quietly refrained from active participation in the anti-Eurocommunist polemics and apparently concurs with much of the Eurocommunist ideology. And Romania, while remaining rigid in its internal affairs, has supported the Eurocommunist positions on numerous occasions, much to the displeasure of Moscow. Even within the Soviet elite there are differences of opinion on how to deal with this new political force. Men like Masharov, Andropov, and Zymyanin appear strongly opposed to the Eurocommunists while Ponomarev and Zagladin appear much more conciliatory. Brezhnev, although generally moderate in his approach, appears to waver back and forth, depending upon the current consensus within the ruling elite. In fact, Katushev's

recent dismissal might be linked with Brezhnev's insistence that moderation be pursued — a course Katushev has been known to oppose, especially recently in Eastern Europe. The continuation or growth of these differences within the Soviet bloc could easily militate against the development of a successful bloc-wide policy toward the Eurocommunist challenge. Should this occur, a crisis of major proportions could develop in Eastern Europe and possibly within the USSR itself.

X. IF ERROR, CORRECT; IF EVIL, DESTROY

Ranged against the awesome powers of the Soviet state, led by the elite of the CPSU, are but a few communist parties who see themselves as "Eurocommunists," and an additional number of communist parties who, from time to time and issue to issue, tend to support the goals and concepts embodied in the Eurocommunist phenomenon. The ruling elites within the Kremlin and also within virtually every capital of Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe are faced with an all-too-real nightmare; Eurocommunism, whose proponents have been labeled as "anti-communist, anti-Soviet, and traitors," is on the offensive; a situation brought about largely by these parties' ringing declarations of independence from Moscow and their support for democratic, pluralistic, and parliamentary principles. Two of the major Eurocommunist parties, the PCF and the PCI, are currently within reach of strong, influential, and active participation in their national governments, in fact the PCI already participates informally. The last election in Italy gave the PCI thirty-four percent of the vote and its support is growing. The regional elections in France during March 1977 gave the Communist/Socialist coalition its biggest election victory since World War II. Assuming that this "alliance of the left" can hold together, their victory in next year's national parliamentary elections appears as a strong possibility.

The Eurocommunist parties have also openly and successfully challenged the CPSU's claim to primacy in and leadership of the world communist movement and have publicly denounced and renounced as obsolete and irrelevant many of the ideological shibboleths that have for years upheld and undergirded the power, prestige, and legitimacy of the Soviet political system, as personified by the CPSU. Beginning gradually with the "fraternal assistance" to Czechoslovakia in 1968 and especially after the East Berlin conference of 1976, the Eurocommunist parties have become increasingly vocal and outspoken in their opposition to the Soviet-bloc's treatment of its dissidents and reform-minded citizens; a Eurocommunist-dissident linkage has been established and has continued to grow. Confronted with unrest at home and within Eastern Europe, the Soviets are also faced with the fact that there are ominous signs that some of their Warsaw Pact "allies" may be beginning to "soften" their stand against the "heretics" in Western Europe. Given these and other germane developments, combined with the CPSU's failure to implement an effective policy to combat Eurocommunism and its impact within its empire, in what direction can the Soviets be expected to move? What forms will their responses most likely take? How, indeed, will they attempt to counter this "reversed flow in the direction of initiative and influence within the world communist movement?"

In the short-term, the CPSU faces two major difficult challenges; the growing dissidence and the up-coming Belgrade

conference on the Helsinki Final Act, a conference the Soviets fear may develop into a confrontation that might erode the Helsinki agreement's value in general and even re-open the question of the 1945 frontiers in Eastern Europe.²⁷⁵

With regard to the dissidents, it seems very reasonable to assert that the CPSU will move to "contain" the human rights movement both at home and in Eastern Europe prior to the conference in Belgrade. Czechoslovakia has already been highly successful in isolating and immobilizing the movement's best-known and most active figures within the country and the Czech tactics could easily be "exported" to the Soviet Union. By relying upon low-key repression, the denial of visa's to foreign correspondents who contact dissidents, the confiscation of telephones and driver's licenses, etc., the dissidents could be denied access to each other and also to the movement's channels to outside public opinion. Immobilizing especially the dissidents' distribution, recruiting, support, and publications activities will, no doubt, be a major aim of the CPSU's "containment" policy.²⁷⁶ It is highly important to the CPSU that the dissidents be silenced. It is evident that the Soviet

²⁷⁵Christian Science Monitor, 4 March 1977, p. 7.

²⁷⁶Christian Science Monitor, 4 May 1977, p. 6.

leaders are both afraid of freedom and afraid to admit that they are afraid of freedom; they wish to practice repression and yet pretend they are not practicing repression. The bolder and more effective the dissidents are permitted to become, the more difficult it becomes for the CPSU to pursue this contradictory policy. For this and other important reasons, some Western analysts are firmly convinced that Moscow has decided it has nothing to lose by moving forcefully against dissidents in advance of the Belgrade conference, a view fully shared by this author.²⁷⁷

Another factor seldom emphasized that would tend to greatly support such a move by the Soviet elite is the fact that, contrary to Andropov's assertion that the "Soviet Union is more monolithic than ever before,"²⁷⁸ the Soviet Union is not homogeneous nor is it "monolithic." It is an empire in which the Russians dominate a number of smaller ethnic groups. Within the Soviet Union, over 100 million non-Slavs live and work. Russians are a majority of the population only in the RSFSR; everywhere else they are in a minority, yet they hold most of the high-ranking and influential positions. Muslims, Mongols, Uzbeks, Moldavians, Romanians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Latvians, Tadziiks, Jews,

²⁷⁷Christian Science Monitor, 5 March 1977, pp. 1, 9.

²⁷⁸Pravda, 23 April 1976, (FBIS).

and other non-Slavs all have grievances, as do the Russians' Slavic brothers, the Ukranians. The CPSU is highly cognizant of the fact that "complaints" can become contagious and "concessions" can give "ideas" to a lot of other people. This is not to imply that disintegration of the Soviet empire is imminent, but no one is sure. The CPSU dismisses the notion as a "wild dream" of their enemies, but yet they are quick to stifle the slightest sign of nationalistic dissidence in any part of their empire. The Soviet ruling elite feels vulnerable, whether it is or not.²⁷⁹

By the containment of dissidence prior to the Belgrade conference, the Soviets most likely hope to focus the conference's major attentions on economic and technical issues, primarily on "Baskets One and Two" of the Helsinki Final Act. The Sofia conference of "fraternal parties" held in March 1977 was most assuredly devoted not only to forging a common program relative to the Eurocommunists and the dissidents but also to solidifying a unified approach to the conference in Belgrade. Since March, the Soviets have been putting extreme pressure upon the Yugoslavs to produce a conference which has no surprises and focuses more on economic cooperation than on human issues. They view the Belgrade conference as a "technical meeting," and, according

²⁷⁹See "Mr. Brezhnev is Sensitive — with Reason," Christian Science Monitor, 29 March 1977, p. 35.

to a Yugoslav source, "want to stand up, say what they have to say, and go home quickly."²⁸⁰

In the short-term, time and events seem to have moved to the Soviet's advantage. East-bloc dissident activities currently no longer command the headlines they did in late 1976 and early 1977; certainly a concrete result of the bloc's "containment and isolation" policies. President Carter has "softened" his human and civil rights campaign to a great degree since his April 1977 United Nations speech, probably as a result of the Soviets' immediate rejection of his initial SALT proposals, in addition to the decreased access the dissidents have had to the Western media. The French and the West Germans continue to downplay the entire human rights issue and there are indications that the West, in general, will attempt to pull its punches at Belgrade in the interests of detente. Although the preparatory work for the conference begins in June 1977, the main, substantive part of the meetings will not begin until mid-September or later.²⁸¹ Should the international situation change dramatically to the Soviets' disadvantage, the possibility does exist that the Soviets and her allies could simply boycott the Belgrade conference altogether. Such a possibility was, in fact, communicated to Washington in mid-March 1977.²⁸²

²⁸⁰Washington Post, 17 March 1977, p. A19.

²⁸¹Ibid.

²⁸²U.S. News and World Report, 14 March 1977, p. 12.

Although this communication may have been only an artificial threat, it does underscore the CPSU's deep sensitivity to the dissidence issue and its strong commitment to a Belgrade conference devoid of effective attacks upon the party's legitimacy and domestic policies; views certainly shared by the greater portion of the ruling elites in Eastern Europe.

In the attempt to assess long-term Soviet responses to the challenges posed to the CPSU by the Eurocommunist parties' existence, policies, and impacts, one is forced to probe what Winston Churchill once called a riddle wrapped in an enigma, that is, the real aims of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This is, to be sure, a difficult task, but one that must be undertaken, not only as simply an academic exercise but also in a sincere attempt to provide Western policy-makers with meaningful data concerning the Soviet intentions; one of the major pillars upon which Western foreign policy should rest. Numerous attempts to discover the CPSU's aims regarding the Eurocommunist phenomenon have been made, and they have often resulted in contradictory or conflicting conclusions; quite possibly because the CPSU party leaders themselves have contradictory and conflicting preferences. Prior to turning to this author's perceptions of future Soviet initiatives and responses, it might be well to examine briefly several of the current theories which have been routinely advanced as the most likely course of action the Soviet leadership is determined to follow.

One of the most common assessments of Soviet aims is that the CPSU has and will always support the Eurocommunist parties in order to "subvert" Western Europe, destroy the NATO alliance, and isolate the United States. It is argued, sometimes even relatively convincingly, that since the Soviet Union has aggressive designs in Western Europe they could hardly give up such useful pressure groups as the Eurocommunist parties have been and would find their presence in Western European governments a political and strategic windfall. This approach, however, no matter how popular and credible it was in the immediate post-WW II period, is now no longer tenable; the communist parties of Western Europe in the 1970's are far different from the same parties of the late 1940's. Moscow is certainly cognizant of the fact that a Western European nation falling under the control of a pro-Soviet political party would upset the balance of power to a degree surely to arouse an immediate response from the United States and other Western European nations as well. The Western response might not only spell the quick demise of such a pro-Soviet government, but could also endanger the flow of Western assistance, food, technology, and soft-ware into the Soviet Union at a time when these items are critically needed. The theory of "aggression by coordinated communist subversion" not only saddles the CPSU with risks and liabilities it is ill-equipped to handle, but also requires that one consider all the disputes, disagreements, discords, and dissensions between the CPSU and

the Eurocommunist parties to be a sham or a charade; a situation that the facts do not support.

A second stratagem commonly advanced, merely a modification of the one just reviewed, would propose that the CPSU has and will continue to basically "ignore" the Eurocommunist parties. For the time being, the CPSU will choose to allow the Eurocommunist parties almost unbounded ideological latitude and encourage them to achieve as much power as possible, taking special care not to alarm the West. Finally, once a "moderate" Eurocommunist party has achieved massive national powers, the CPSU and the "hidden hardliners" will purge the moderates from the party and assume control, thus creating an instant pro-Soviet regime in the West. This prescription, however, suffers from the same limitations as the first. Additionally, although certainly some staff planners inside the Kremlin might have considered this approach, it betrays an indifference to ideology no CPSU leader could afford and tremendously overestimates the CPSU's ability to control and direct the activities of the Eurocommunist parties.

A third theory is based primarily on ideological grounds. Its proponents would argue that although the CPSU may not wish to support the Eurocommunists it has no choice but to do so. Since the CPSU rules in the name of the working class, it cannot afford for the sake of its own legitimacy, to desert those communist parties which represent the working

class of the capitalist countries. Once a Eurocommunist party formed a working government in the West, the CPSU, in accordance with ideology and a modified Brezhnev Doctrine, could not allow it to be voted out or otherwise removed from power. Rather than recognize its own rule as illegitimate, its Marxism-Leninism a myth, and its proletarian internationalism simply a cover for interests of state, the CPSU would be obliged to give up detente, surrender its relations with Western governments, industrialists, and bankers in order to come to the aid and assistance of an embattled Eurocommunist party. In addition to virtually ignoring all but the ideological motivations of the Soviet state, this particular theory suffers from one major fatal flaw; although the USSR is a "revolutionary state," it has always put the interest of state before those of revolution.²⁸³ The 1918 Brest-Litovsk treaty, the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939, the interventions of 1956 and 1968, the Soviet treatment of the PCF during the 1974 national elections in France, and the CPSU's reaction to the events in Portugal during 1975 adequately demonstrate the limited impact of ideology upon the decisions made by the Soviet elite.

A fourth scenario, one recently put forth by Charles Gati, postulates Soviet tolerance, not only of the Eurocommunist

²⁸³ Zimmerman, "Western," p. 1.

parties themselves, but also of unprecedented reform and adaptation within the Eastern European economies and politics.²⁸⁴ Asserting that Eastern Europe is now an economic liability to the Kremlin, that there is popular discontent and even tension within Eastern European elites, and that the Soviets do not desire to further alienate the Eurocommunist parties, the advocates of this approach claim that liberalization is now possible. They state that the Soviets have indeed shown restraint and procrastination in the past and with rising worker complaints, increased consumer demands, and the failure of the system to reconcile economic realities with ideological imperatives, reform and adaptation must, by necessity, occur. Gati, himself, finds this option "potentially destabilizing" and raises the point that even a "partial introduction" of the "Eurocommunist anti-model might serve to unite the Soviet leadership behind a rigid, conservative, and possibly violent reaction."²⁸⁵ Given the Soviet reactions in 1953, 1956, and 1968, in addition to their rhetoric and actions in recent times, this particular theory represents more of a tendency toward "wishful thinking" than an objective assessment of political reality.

²⁸⁴See Gati, "Europeanization," pp. 547-553.

²⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 549-550.

Finally, it has been postulated that the Soviet Union may be opposed to the Eurocommunist entry into national governments for two very different reasons. Ideologically, the CPSU would not wish to see the Eurocommunist parties softened or corrupted by allying themselves with socialist and social democrats in order to rescue the West from the "crisis of capitalism." Moscow certainly wishes to see these parties kept ready for the revolution which is bound to occur in the future. This attitude on the part of the CPSU explains why they condemn the alliances of the Eurocommunist parties and why they consistently recall them to the "true path" of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Alternatively, the CPSU keeps re-emphasizing the "hard-line" in order to scare the European voters away from the Eurocommunist parties. They do not want the Eurocommunist in power because they have given up the hope of revolution and wish to continue with detente. A communist government in Western Europe could illicit a Western response disadvantageous to Moscow; if it failed, it could be humiliating to the whole communist movement, and if it got into trouble, it could be as costly as Cuba, perhaps more costly if one considers the conditions in contemporary Italy. Worst of all from the CPSU's point of view, if such a Eurocommunist government worked smoothly within the framework of democracy, pluralism, and a free opposition, it could infect the nations of Eastern Europe and the Soviet state as well; if it worked in Paris and Rome,

why not Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, or even Moscow?²⁸⁶ Based upon current realities, this forecast of Soviet aims and intentions appears to be the most valid of the group but yet falls somewhat short of expressing the totality of the most likely Soviet response to the Eurocommunist challenge. A brief examination of the contemporary conditions germane to the Soviet dilemma should allow one to expand this latter scenario and to underscore the great likelihood of its formulation and implementation by the CPSU's ruling elite.

There are many factors within Eastern Europe which would tend to militate against any substantive reform and adaptation. First, the ruling elites of most Eastern European countries have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo; it is they who enjoy the luxuries and privileges that the communist system of government provides, and they are not likely to assist in its demise. Additionally, one of the major factors that enables these elites to rule is the popular domestic appreciation of the Soviet presence. Without this presence, a great many Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, etc., just might shed their attitudes of resignation and passive acquiescence. If Novotny could be toppled in Czechoslovakia, what would keep Kadar, Honecker, or Gierek from suffering a similar fate. The Soviet military presence not only supports the current

²⁸⁶McInnes, Eurocommunism, p. 76.

regimes, but also provides an effective brake on revisionism or deviations from CPSU directives. Thus, the same presence that upholds a regime can also serve to bring it down. Due to the presence of Soviet armed forces within or near their borders, in addition to heavy economic dependence upon the USSR, none of the members of the Warsaw Pact is in a position to stray far from Moscow-prescribed orthodoxy in its internal affairs.²⁸⁷ Although the Soviets have permitted some reform in Eastern Europe, none of the reforms have been allowed to progress to the point where the party's monopoly of power would be jeopardized.²⁸⁸ The lessons of the "Prague Spring" were not lost upon the Eastern Europeans and the Brezhnev Doctrine is sufficiently ambiguous so as to intimidate would-be reformers without offering them an effective guideline. The existence of the Brezhnev Doctrine clearly underscores the fact that the autonomy currently permitted in Eastern Europe exists without the concomitant ideological acceptance by the Soviets of state sovereignty as the fundamental characteristic of international relations. Toleration of some autonomy in Eastern Europe represents Soviet pragmatism, not ideological change, and for this reason such autonomy as does exist in the area is highly unstable.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷James E. Dougherty and Diane K. Pfalzgraff, Eurocommunism and the Atlantic Alliance, Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Inc., 1977, pp. 32-33.

²⁸⁸Groth, Eastern Europe after Czechoslovakia, p. 55.

²⁸⁹Kenneth Jowitt, "Images of Detente and the Soviet Political Order," Paper presented to Institute of International Studies, University of Calif. Berkeley, CA., 1977, p. 21.

A regime in Eastern Europe desirous of reform must operate in either one of two ways. One option — the Polish — is co-optation by the Soviets in return for a higher status and some policy maneuverability within the framework of Soviet hegemony. This option risks not only domestic instability but also the danger that the Soviets will not take the individual country's problems into sufficient account when pursuing Soviet interests. The other option — the Romanian — is to adopt a nationalist position asserting equality and the right to pursue national policies and positions. This second option risks both exclusion from bloc affairs and Soviet intervention, invasion, or occupation. The result is that any attempt by an Eastern European regime to complicate its identity, play different political roles, or to reform its policies or programs must remain a very high-risk venture.²⁹⁰

Relative to the Soviet Union, it seems increasingly clear that powerful forces within the CPSU view polycentric tendencies in Europe with grave misgivings. Soviet acquiescence in the "dismantling" of European communism would signal a retreat from the ideological goal of world revolution, from the invincible, historic progress of Marxism-Leninism. Such a retreat could not be expected to come

²⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

voluntarily from a regime steeped in ideology; and if it did, such a move just might convince radicals in Asia, Latin America, and Africa that China was, indeed, the sole, legitimate spokesman for world revolution.²⁹¹ Further, any significant "liberalization" in Eastern Europe could threaten both COMECON and the Warsaw Pact. This latter organization, which can be considered a Stalinist revival of the old Tsarist ambition to secure the western flanks of Russia by developing its own imperial cordon sanitaire, serves two important functions. First it denies the use and control of the region to all non-communist forces and secondly, it provides non-Soviet land and bases for any offensive actions that may be contemplated in Western Europe. Given its importance to the CPSU, no actions that would threaten the Warsaw Pact are likely to be tolerated by the Soviet Union.

The CPSU also suffers from the fact that it has not demonstrated the ability to change and adapt. As Paul Cocks correctly states, much of Soviet history has been a "frenzied workshop attempting to rationalize the Soviet system and to overcome the inheritance and consequences of the October Revolution."²⁹² History has provided few examples of reforming bureaucracies capable of changing from

²⁹¹Groth, Eastern Europe after Czechoslovakia, pp. 53-54.

²⁹²Paul Cocks, "The Rationalization of Party Control," in Change in Communist Systems, Chalmers Johnson, ed., Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970, p. 183.

within and even fewer of totalitarian dictatorships accomplishing these same tasks. The aims of the Soviet rationalization have been to preserve the substance of totalitarian power while perfecting its methods, in effect erecting an "administered society: totalitarianism without terror."²⁹³ There has been no substantial change in the attitudes of the CPSU's leadership about the necessity for continuous control and those changes that have occurred have been quantitative rather than qualitative. The Soviet system is designed so that "not one Communist remains outside the field of vision of the party organization and beyond comradely control."²⁹⁴

Needless to say, impacts from the West also put constraints upon the amount and the direction of liberalization the Soviets are willing to tolerate. The Western policy of bridge-building only strengthens the Soviet conviction that it must increase its Warsaw Pact and internal organizational cohesion and political uniformity.²⁹⁵ Additionally, any kind of "spin-off" from Eurocommunism developing in Eastern Europe would most likely result in Soviet leaders and their hardline colleagues in Eastern Europe simply imposing even more rigid controls, censorship, and repression.

²⁹³Ibid., p. 186.

²⁹⁴Ibid., p. 188.

²⁹⁵Jowitt, "Images," p. 22.

Assuming Eurocommunism will ease life in Eastern Europe — any more than has the CSCE and the Helsinki Final Act — is little more than a vain hope lodged in the hearts of Western democrats.²⁹⁶

In light of all this speculation, opinion, data, fact, and experience, what then is the West to anticipate, in the long-term, regarding the Soviet responses to the myriad of challenges posed to it by the Eurocommunist parties? First, the CPSU will undoubtedly continue its anti-revisionist polemics in the quickly fading hope that they can rekindle the revolutionary spirit within these parties. If nothing else, the CPSU may hope to split the Eurocommunist parties into pro-Soviet and nationally-oriented factions such as has occurred in the Nordic states of Western Europe. In any event, the CPSU will continue, for the moment, to be privately opposed to active and influential Eurocommunist participation in national governments since such participation, if successful, could pose a serious threat to stability in Eastern Europe and in the USSR itself by offering a socialist "model" at strong variance with the system currently professed and practiced by the CPSU.

Should these efforts fail to blunt the Eurocommunist impact within Eastern Europe and the USSR, one could reasonably

²⁹⁶See Dougherty and Pfalzgraff, Eurocommunism, pp. 32-33.

expect the CPSU, in order to preserve its hegemony in Eastern Europe and its legitimacy at home, to move to read the Eurocommunist parties out of the world communist movement; an effort made in concert with as many "pro-Soviet" communist parties as possible. By publicly denying that the Eurocommunist parties are "true" communist parties, asserting that they have degenerated into social-democratic opportunists practicing anti-Sovietism and pluralistic democracy, the CPSU would owe them no more than it currently owes to such traitors as Mao Tse Tung or Enver Hoxa. Because of the Eurocommunist commitment to working within the democratic system, jettisoning the dogmas of democratic centralism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, proletarian internationalism, and the Leninist party model, an effective Soviet-sponsored propaganda campaign designed to portray the Eurocommunists as no longer communist parties would be quite simple to formulate and carry out. Indeed, the first steps of such a program may have already been initiated, beginning with the Novotny, Zaradov, and Masherov pronouncements in 1975, the amplifications of their assessments by Brezhnev, Andropov, and Zhivkov in 1976, and culminating thus far in the declarations of the March 1977 conference in Sofia and Bilak's characterization of the Eurocommunists as traitors engaged in "unprincipled and treacherous policies." Elements of the ruling elites of the Soviet bloc have evidently recognized that what Eurocommunism represents is not

simply a "fundamentally different strategy" but an altogether "different conception of socialism," with all that that entails.²⁹⁷ Given the increased din of Soviet and Soviet-inspired polemics, the eventual dismissal of the Eurocommunist parties from the world communist movement seems highly probable, although its timing remains a significantly open issue.

Simultaneous with the "excommunication" of the offending parties from the communist movement, the West can reasonably be expected to witness increased efforts within the USSR and Eastern Europe designed to further suppress internal dissent and unrest. The Soviets are likely to insist upon unbending ideological purity within the ranks of the Eastern European parties, and the governments will be subjected to "comradely persuasion" in order to insure that they toe tightly to the prescribed Soviet line. The Sofia conference was certainly one attempt in this direction, as have been the developing "hardline" policies of East Germany and Bulgaria; policies strongly reminiscent of Stalinist tenets.²⁹⁸ Judging from recent CPSU statements and actions, this tightening-up policy has most likely already begun. The strong buildup of Soviet military forces in Central Europe

²⁹⁷ Christian Science Monitor, 9 March 1977, p. 9.

²⁹⁸ Christian Science Monitor, 2 February 1977, p. 4.

may indicate the full fury this campaign may reach in the future should advice, persuasion, and pressure fail to achieve the desired ends.

What is frightening to consider is that the repression of revisionism may not be sufficient to stifle the dissent and unrest that is currently building just under the surface in Eastern Europe, and quite possibly inside the USSR itself. As a result, it is certainly plausible to envision an escalation of suppression by the CPSU even to the point of intervention and invasion similar to the 1968 occupation of Czechoslovakia. A recent interview with Jiri Pelikan, the Listy editor, speaks directly to this point:

PELIKAN: The government has reacted — so far to a limited extent — with detentions and arrests. It seems to me that we are still in a waiting period, however. If I may put it in very simple terms, I believe that the regime could make concessions — if you like, detente gestures. If it does not, the possibility of explosions of discontent cannot be ruled out, not only in Czechoslovakia, but above all in Poland. Frankly, I maintain that the situation in Eastern bloc countries is as dramatic as in 1956 and 1968, on the eve of the events in Poznan and Prague...

... To survive, this system is forced to change nothing and prefers to defend itself stubbornly against every form of dissent and against every innovative initiative...

... If a Czech were to promote the ideas of Berlinguer, Marchais, or Carrillo, he would be thrown in jail...

INTERVIEWER: Might Soviet reaction follow the lines of 1968?

PELIKAN: If it were just Czechoslovakia, intervention is always possible. But ... if, paraphrasing Che Guevara, there were one, two, or three "springs" tomorrow, then simultaneous intervention would certainly be impossible. Even the USSR is no longer what it was in 1968... 299

The significant point Pelikan raises is that without concessions, dissent and unrest will continue and could lead to massive, popular uprisings against the regimes in power. As both this report and Pelikan's interview assert, these concessions are not likely to be made since they would undermine the prestige, power, and legitimacy of the regimes which made them. Although it is true that the USSR of 1977 is not the USSR of 1968, it is difficult to believe, given the magnitude of the issues involved and the interests of the Soviet state, that the CPSU would at all hesitate in using military force if the very basis and structure of that state were threatened. The Soviets would most likely move as they saw the first "spring" develop and not wait around for numbers two and three to flower. They would be obliged to take advantage of indecision and confusion while it lasts; the less unity, decisiveness and purpose exhibited by the regimes in Eastern Europe, the less likely is the chance of meaningful armed resistance.

²⁹⁹ L'Europeo, 28 January 1977, (FBIS).

The Soviet ability to control Eastern Europe is essential to its world role; it is the Soviets' military and political forefield. There are 21 Soviet divisions in East Germany, 5 in Czechoslovakia, 4 in Hungary, and 2 in Poland. The supply line to the divisions in East Germany also runs through Poland. There are at least 9,000 tanks assigned to that combined force, with over 10,000 more backing them up west of the Urals.³⁰⁰ This enormous force facing Western Europe is a powerful political weapon, causing in some Western minds defeatism, in others hopelessness. Some Western European statesmen even talk about Europe's "Finlandization" — meaning a Western Europe fatalistically giving up any idea of resisting Soviet domination. A strong Warsaw Pact under Soviet control is a tremendous political weapon as long as it appears solid, reliable, and there.

Control of Eastern Europe is also vital to the USSR in terms of economic value . It is naive to believe that the Soviet state would give up its economic advantages in that region willingly, as it would have to do if it opened Eastern Europe to strong Western political and economic influences.

Finally, the same ideological dogmas and power relationships which support and legitimize the regimes in Eastern

³⁰⁰Christian Science Monitor, 1 February 1977, p. 27.

Europe also support and legitimize the CPSU as well. To grant the demanded concessions or to grant the "importation" of Eurocommunist ideology would be tantamount to the CPSU's admission that its rule was illegitimate, its shibboleths myths, its ideology no longer relevant, and its power and prestige a baseless sham. If even one nation broke from the "fraternal brotherhood," the rest would quickly attempt to follow. For the CPSU, it would be like opening Pandora's Box.

Thus, the stakes are high, and inaction will only increase the risks involved in later action. Because of the inherent inflexibility of the Soviet system, the CPSU can only respond with the tools it has used since the October Revolution — an escalating implementation of persuasion, repression, suppression, intervention, and occupation. At present, the CPSU does not have to concern itself with the possibility of NATO/U.S. counter-intervention; there is little enthusiasm in Washington or Western Europe for armed action on behalf of the "captive Eastern European nations." Additionally, unrest and dissidence will continue to grow unless action to curb it is initiated quickly to defuse and control it.

The present upsurge of opposition to some of the communist regimes in Central Europe does not, at first, have the makings of a major crisis — but major crises develop out of small ones. There is considerable potential for upheaval

and the CPSU is more aware of it than the West could ever hope to be. Nationalist pressures in Eastern Europe have overthrown two empires in this century, Turkey and Austro-Hungary, whose death throes triggered a major war. The clash between Soviet domination and East European nationalism has led to substantial use of armed force three times since World War II, in Berlin, in Budapest, and in Prague. It would be totally unrealistic to assume that such clashes can never reoccur. According to a recent Brookings study, the situation in Eastern Europe will remain potentially unstable until the Soviet leaders reconcile themselves to a greater degree of Eastern European autonomy and pluralism.³⁰¹ The CPSU, however, will most likely not permit this autonomy and pluralism to "infect" Eastern Europe. If persuasion fails to bring the recalcitrant parties and peoples into line, then force can and will be the most apparent alternative; the stakes for the CPSU will be too high to allow for the active consideration of a less emphatic option.

It is often postulated that the Eurocommunist-Eastern Europe connection will have an opportunity to flower during the Kremlin's leadership struggle following Brezhnev's departure from power. Proponents of this scenario point to the post-Stalin experiences in Hungary and the post-Khrushchev

³⁰¹The Washington Post, 26 January 1977, p. 32.

experiences in Czechoslovakia to support their proposition. If Brezhnev were to die suddenly or become the victim of a purge, as was Khrushchev, the ensuing struggle for power within the Kremlin could indeed loosen the constraints in Eastern Europe and provide a stimulus for reform and liberalization. But the final outcomes of the Hungarian and Czechoslovak experiences should adequately demonstrate the fate that a third such attempt would incur. Additionally, the ramifications of the leadership struggles of the 1950's and 1960's are not known and appreciated only in the West; the Soviets, too, are most assuredly aware of the difficulties that arose in their cordon sanitaire while the factions fought for power in Moscow. Although a Brezhnev purge is highly unlikely in the foreseeable future, his death is certainly a possibility, as is his voluntary retirement from office. In either case, the possibility that a post-Brezhnev power struggle could occur would give the CPSU leaders an even greater motivation to defuse and control dissidence and unrest at home and in Eastern Europe now — before such a struggle took place. Allowing a Warsaw Pact ally to "stray" during a post-Brezhnev struggle could force the CPSU into a larger confrontation bloodier than either Czechoslovakia or Hungary, especially if the nation that strayed were Poland. Finally, there have only been three leadership changes in the history of the Soviet state, the successions of Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev. These three events are far too few to support generalizations about

succession in the Soviet Union. Although post-Brezhnev problems may occur, a smooth, if not prearranged transition could also take place with a minimum of impact upon Soviet policies and/or Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe.

There is, then, within the responses of the CPSU to the challenges of the Eurocommunist parties to be little cooperation, only growing confrontation leading to the eventual expulsion of the Eurocommunist parties from the world communist movement. This third schism will arouse more bitterness and polemic than the previous breaks with China and Yugoslavia and will coincide with a simultaneous move by the CPSU to purge the USSR and Eastern Europe of any revisionism or opportunism that threatens the prescribed Soviet model of socialism. Should the methods employed by the CPSU fail to achieve their objectives, the West can expect direct Soviet military intervention in at least one "limitedly sovereign" nation in Eastern Europe. Detente may suffer some critical blows, and East-West trade and aid may simply wither. The open, direct, and forceful Soviet interference in the domestic affairs of these small, reform-minded nations will surely disillusion more people, again stiffen the resistance of the faltering West, and (ironically) nourish more dissidence and unrest in Eastern Europe.

But the CPSU will have had little choice — their system provides them with too few options. Change and adaptation

would have meant a serious challenge to the legitimacy, power, and prestige of the Soviet state. Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes seldom if ever end of their own volition; their demise usually comes about as a result of internal conflict or external attack. In the absence of either, they may last for centuries. Having recently achieved a military force capable of deterring virtually any external attack, the CPSU now can be reasonably expected to turn its attention to dissent and unrest within its empire. To paraphrase Massimo Salvadori, since the CPSU recognizes neither differentiation nor the legitimacy of deviation and opposition, what is different is either error or evil. If error, it is to be corrected; if evil, to be destroyed!³⁰²

³⁰²Salvadori, Rise of Modern Communism, p. 159.

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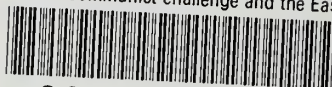
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